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# THE MARKET FOR SOULS

# The Market for Souls

BY ELIZABETH GOODNOW

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ONE evening, while living in a settlement, I went with one of the workers to visit the Night Court. It was then I saw for the first time the girl of the streets, or, at least, it was the first time I had noticed her particularly. She was there in all types and ages, from the young girl of sixteen up to the "old timer" of forty. Some were bold and paid the fine as a matter of course, others were frightened, a few cried. It was all pitiful and tawdry; and my ire was aroused to see a girl compelled to stand before the judge surrounded by a lot of men that touched elbows with her and laughed at her story, leering at her with not one bit of sympathy or pity in their faces.

When I went home I said it was not right, that the girl did not have a fair show; all the foolish things the average woman would say who dislikes personal contact with the stranger;

but every one laughed at me, told me these women did not care, did not think; that they had passed through that stage; that they were all low, all gentle thought had gone long ago, and that any pity for them was sentiment wasted.

I did not believe it, and for days made myself a nuisance and annoyed my friends by asking for information in regard to the women of the streets. Most men insisted that they were better off than working in a sweat shop, that they were a low class of women made for just such work; and all advanced the old argument that it was the oldest profession in the world, must be carried on, and would endure until the end of time. Few women would discuss the subject at all. They looked at me queerly when I wondered if these women thought and loved as we did. Of course they didn't; and why should one want to know, anyway? "Really, dear," they would say, "you are a little—well—peculiar. You know, we in America don't discuss such subjects." I thought they

*should* discuss it. They *should* find out. It did not seem right to pass this great problem over with a shrug of the shoulders and a shocked glance, so I went to work to find out for myself. I learned much from the many kindly people engaged in work among the unfortunate women, but I wanted to see them from a different standpoint than a Rescue Home or an Institution. I wanted to see them as they are, so I visited them and became their friend. I found them mainly victims of circumstances and environment—uneducated, with little refinement (remember I am not speaking of the most prosperous ones in this profession, but simply of the girl in the street), jolly, mostly liking the excitement of the life and thinking little of the tragedy in it.

I ran across, with nearly every girl, the question of the man who lives upon woman's vice. I asked over and over again, "Why do you do it? Why do you give your money to the man? Why do you allow yourself to be beaten, abused and ill-treated in every way?" They

could not really answer. Some gave the man all through love, some through fear; but in time of trouble they all show absolute loyalty. They know that when they are arrested the man will be sent to the penitentiary if they will only tell that he is living on their earnings, but there is practically never a case where the girl will betray him. She takes her punishment, and always swears that the man is innocent, and he goes free.

Why?—We don't know. But there must be some good in such a girl, and something must be done, a way be found to help her. I want people, thinking people, to try and find that way; not to dismiss the subject with a shrug, not to think that it is pitch that cannot be touched without defilement. I want to show them the life of the girl of the streets—its allurements, its brutalities, its tragedies—her suffering, her devotion, her fate. Cleverer people than I must solve the greater problem. She is a human, loving woman like ourselves, struggling against great odds.

These little stories I give you are true in substance, told me by the girls themselves—and I want them to tell you that behind the powder and the paint and the bold cheap ways of the harlot, is the soul of the woman.

# I.

She was only a girl—a girl that should be in about her first year of college—studying a little, flirting more, and living in general the happy-go-lucky life of the well-cared-for American girl. Yet she paid her fine with a laugh and left the Night Court with her head in the air. She came direct to me, as she must pour out her woes and say what she thought of the "fly cop" without danger of that same officer hearing all about it; and more, it is tiring and exciting to be run in, even if it is a weekly occurrence, and she wanted a place to be quiet and rest before starting again on the still hunt.

Her pretty sullen mouth was drawn into hard straight lines, and her eyes, that were generally full of fun and good humor, were bitter and desperate. She slouched down into

her chair, hardly noticing the hot tea and bread I handed her. But, finally, as I knew she would, she broke loose.

"They've got no right, I tell you; it ain't on the square. Here, I've had to give up my night's work, and now I can't go home till I get it again. 'Ten dollars for loiterin'.' Of course, I was loiterin'. Of course, I 'accosted a man on the street.' Ain't that my business? I done it quietly. He smiled at me first. I don't never speak to them till I see it in their eyes they want me. I don't have to—not yet. But that fly cop just wants to be funny, and show that he can do business."

After a while of brooding, she put down her cup and saucer and said:

"Gee, I ain't good company to-night, Miss Smith, but I'm all in, and I'm sore when I think of that ten to be made all over again."

She picked the crumbs carefully from her lap and rose to go. I quietly put her back in the chair and said, "Don't go, Molly. Tell me why you must have ten dollars to-night.

Where does your money go, dear? What do you do with it? Tell me all about it."

She sat quietly for a while, then folding her hands behind her head, leaned back in the big easy-chair and told me why she could not go to what she called home without money.

"Of course, you know, Miss Smith, where all my money goes. Do you think that, if I had the money I make, I would dress like this? Look at my hat—four dollars; my suit—fourteen dollars at Siegel's; my shoes—two-ninety-eight; and my underclothes as dead common. I ain't got a hundred dollars' worth of clothes nor nothin' else in the world. Yet, I make two or three hundred a month, sometimes more. No, I don't booze, not with my money. If a man wants to buy me a drink. why, I let him, 'cause no matter what you say, a little booze does make things easier; and I don't go to theaters nor nothin'. Every cent goes to Fred.

"He don't wear no two-ninety-eight shoes, not he. Nor does his clothes come from Sixth

Avenue. And he boozes, even buys champagne for his lady friends—and it's all my money—that I tramp up and down the street for—that I get run in for—that I run the chance of gettin' my face beaten in, when I take a drunken man up to my room. And when I earn it dollar by dollar, man by man, and go home at night, what do I get for it?

"Do you remember the other night when I came to you and asked you to take me in, even if I had to sleep on the floor—when I couldn't go on the street 'cause my face was so swoll' from cryin' that no man in his senses would want me?

"Well, I went home that night about two o'clock. Business was poor and I was tired and wet and unhappy. The door was locked, and I had a hard time wakin' Fred up. When he finally heard me he said, 'How much you got?'

"I said, 'Twelve dollars.'

"He said, 'Throw it over the transom.'

"I did, and then he said, ''Tain't enough,

you get out and hustle,' and he wouldn't let me in.

"I just couldn't hustle any more that night, and I sat on the stairs and cried until he got tired and hollered to me, 'I've had enough of that. Now, you git.'"

"But, Molly, do you *have* to give it to him?"

"Of course, I have to give it to him. Do you suppose I give up my dough for fun? I tried everythin' at first, tried niggin' on him, but he found it out, and then there was Hell to pay, so I gave in."

"Why don't you leave him, dear, go away from him? He can't hurt you, and if he follows you the police will protect you."

She sat for a while and looked at me in a pitying manner, as if she realized the weakened condition of my intellect, but still liked me; then, in a bored voice and stretching her arms above her painted face in such a tired, weary way that went to my heart, said:

"The *police!* Well, I won't say what I'd

like to, as you don't like cussin'. Leave him! Leave him! Ain't I left him? Ain't we all left our man at first? And don't we have to come back? Don't you worry, 'cause he don't. He knows that as long as I can make a dollar and don't get sick, he will be able to live off me, and then when I'm up against it, he will get a new one."

"How will he get a new one, Molly?"

"Search me. Perhaps he is putting a little aside each month to buy a fresh girl when she comes over, or he will get some green little country girl like me, and promise all kinds of things to her, and finally land her in a joint where he has a stand in, and after that he owns her, unless she has friends who will help her; and he takes mighty good care to find that out before he wastes any time with her. He don't want no girl who has friends.

"Well, good-bye. I'm off. I do feel better to get it off my chest. No, I can't stay, that ten must be made. No, no, dear, not tonight. Some day, perhaps, I'll have the nerve

to say, 'To Hell with the Pope,' and then he'll beat the life out of me, or do me some other dirty trick, and then you'll *have* to take me in. But as it is, I'm out on the street to 'loiter,' but I'll try to be mighty careful in my 'loiterin'.' No more Night Courts for me for a few days. Good-bye.—Gee, it's cold and nasty."

## II.

"Look at me, Miss Smith. I'm doin' the heavy intell—intellectual—Gee, you can see it's workin' by the words I use. Can I make a cup of coffee? Thanks, it'll keep me awake and I'm dead sleepy. I'm supposed to work for three hours yet, but the way I'm loafin' lately is a caution."

"But why are you especially intellectual to-night, Milly? What have you been doing?"

She laughed in her noisy, hearty way, and said: "Say, you wouldn't guess in a thousand years. I been to a lecture on—wait a minute—it's the da—'scuse me—the darndest name you ever heard of," and she fished around in her stocking and pulled out a card. "Just read the top-liner." I read "American Society of Sanitary and Moral Prophylaxis."

"Isn't that some? But that's only startin'; read what the first Johnny gave us. 'Some Thoughts on the Ætiology, Prophylaxis and Treatment of the Social Ill.' Wouldn't that jar you? and it only means: What'll we do with the sports?"

"But, Milly," I gasped, "how in the world did you get there? I shouldn't call that in your line."

"Say, ain't it a joke? Well, I nearly dropped dead when I found out what it was, myself. But I was moonin' along the street and I saw a lot of people goin' into a building. I sort o' wondered what it was and I was tired and cross, and I thinks to myself, perhaps it's somethin' that don't cost nothin', pictures or somethin', so in I moseys along with the rest. I sat down on the back seat, as I didn't know whether I'd have to beat it, and I wanted to be ready. It was a fine place, a big sort of hall with pictures of old guys on the wall, and some of those marble statues that's cut off

about the shoulders—what do you call 'em—not jags—"

"You mean busts, Milly."

"Busts, yes, that's it, busts—knew it was somethin' I'd heard about before. Well, I kind o' liked the joint. A nice little man got up and talked a lot about—well, I couldn't tell what he said; it was about that second thing you read up there. I tried to catch on to what he was givin' us, but the only thing I tumbled to was 'social evil,' and I knew that means us. I listened a while, but I must 'a gone to sleep 'cause I don't remember nothin' until I heard a man yell: 'Pimps and Police!' Say, didn't I come to! I thought 'twas a raid and started to make a dive for the window, or a door or somethin', but nobody did nothin', so I cooled down and there was a man—kind o' nice-lookin' man, too—shoutin' and beatin' the air and sayin' the pimps and police were the cause of everythin' in old New York. I liked that fellow. I could understand everythin' he said; he talked English, and didn't he

light into our men and the police! He kind o' looked as if he knew what he was talkin' about, too, while most of the others who talked wouldn't know a disorderly house, as they called it, from a church.

"It makes me dead tired to have a lot of nice old guys, who stay at home nights and read the Christian Advocate, get up and talk about us girls. What do they know about us, or the business, except what they've read in a book, or heard some other old guy, who heard some other old guy of the same sort say he heard? But to go back to my nice man, who looked as if he *knew*, he had a lot of horse sense except in one thing. He said he didn't believe in puttin' us girls in licensed houses, or in one part of the city, and such rot. Now, he's way off, 'cause it would be a darned sight better for us, in a way, if we could pay our little so much per, rather than be grafted off all the time by the police. Then, I can't see how any one can help seein', it's best to put us in a quarter of our own. Then, if a man wants

us, he's got to come and hunt us up, and he comes there for a purpose and knows what he's after. He ain't no innocent kid goin' to school.

"Now, I ain't knockin' my business, 'cause it's my business to see a nice young kid going along mindin' his own affairs, and I give him a little look, and say, 'Come along with me, honey,' 'cause I'm on the street, and when I'm on daytimes I'm lookin' for the man or boy who ain't lookin' for me. I like the man who's goin' to his work or office or school with a little toot the last thing in his mind. But, you see, he's chasin' along and a pretty girl like me kind o' rubs up against him, and he begins to feel around in his pocket for loose change. Now, if we were in a place by ourselves, or made to live in licensed houses, quite likely he'd go along wherever he'd started for, and never think of women at all; but, perhaps, it'd be bad for business, because that ain't the class of men who go to houses. Lots of men that'll make a date on the street, wouldn't be

seen goin' in a joint. They'd be ashamed or scared, afraid the police'd get on to 'em, or that they might meet their wife's cousin's husband there.

"I don't know, either, but what it'd spoil good money to put us by ourselves. Our trade wouldn't be such good class, and then, if we're licensed, that means doctor's exams. As it is, we can tip a little and get a little card, sayin' it's all O.K., when it ain't with nine out of ten of us, 'cause you can't pick up everybody and take care. Perhaps, if there was a hospital and crankier inspection run by the city, it'd be a little more costly to get the doctors to lie about —about——"

"We'll say the state of your health, Milly."

"That's just what I want to say. Ain't it fine to be educated? But I will be soon if I keep on going to that sanitary and moral prop —prop— Say, hasn't that got somethin' to do with tooth-brushes? I saw a word somethin' like it on my new tooth-brush with little holes in the top of it— But what's that got to

do with us women? Well, never mind, it ain't worth worryin' about— I'm still thinkin' about that old sports' club. They talked a lot about reform. Now, that word just makes me gag. Why won't they understand that there ain't no reform until we're down and out? When we're young and havin' a good time— and a nice man is always around the corner, we don't want to reform. Who wants to give up the pettin' and the drinkin' and the ten a day to go to somebody's kitchen and work like a dog and have one day out a week, and get five little plunks Saturday night for a whole seven days of feedin' some one else and scrubbin' some one else's floor— And by Saturday night one is so lonesome and tired and blue, one just slides out and says, 'Oh, little old Seventh Avenue for me!' I know, 'cause I tried it. I was pinched once, and the probation officer took me to a nice little joint and I stayed there a while. Nice place and the woman is a dandy, but it's slow. Every afternoon some lady or other'd come down, and talk to us about Mount

Hood, or the climate in Alaska, or Restoration of Greek Drama or some such simple, elevatin' subject, and we'd sew and say, 'Yes, ma'am; no, ma'am,' and look as if we'd been mistook in our callin'. Oh, say, there was a nice guy came down and talked to us one day —funny place for a man to come, don't you think so? Well, he said he wanted to be a friend to us—we was all willin'—and he said when we left the place we must take one word for our motto—'Hustle!' The person who got on in this world was the one who hustled and hustled hard. Lord love him, didn't he know we was all 'hustlin'' as hard as we could, when the cop pinched us? Nice sort of man, but he didn't know much about the American language.

"Where was I? Oh, yes. Say, don't my mind scatter somethin' awful? Well, after I'd proved I was an angel, and only wanted a chance to walk the straight and narrow path—I got it—in a kitchen. Search me—no more in mine! I nearly died, and the lady

knowed I was tryin' to reform and she wouldn't let me do nothin'. Gee! Wasn't I tired of it! No one to talk to, nowhere to go nights but a bum little room, and look at myself in a four by five mirror. I stuck to it for two weeks, then I sloped. I'd rather get a lickin' every night from Bill than have no attentions at all.

"When I reform, it's when I'm old and sick, and no one buys me a drink, and I see I'm up against it; then's the time to start again. But what's the use of my sweatin' about it now? I'm only twenty, got ten years more, if I'm lucky."

She started to go, but she hadn't gratified all my curiosity about the meeting, "What else did they do, Milly? You haven't finished about the lecture."

"Didn't I? Well, a lot of people talked, mostly rot—what I could catch on to; then —Gee!—Didn't I get cold? Up rose that same probation officer and it was my time to say 'Skidoo,' and I slid. Fool way to spend

an evenin', but—Oh, say," feeling madly around in her stocking—" Where's that card? Ah, you got it. What a scare I had! Nice old guy sat next to me—wrote an address on the thing and passed it to me, so—well—perhaps it wasn't time dead wasted, and—as the lady says in the story-book.—' I'll give 'em my patronage.' "

## III.

He sent for me to come and see him the night before the execution. And the thing sitting there bent, cowed, trembling, was not a man, simply a cringing, frightened animal, paying for the vices of his ancestors, his environment, and paying dearly. To look at him he was only a boy, not more than twenty-six or twenty-seven, and it was hard to believe that he was the vicious, depraved man that we had been reading about for the last month.

He did not raise his head when I came into the cell, and I, feeling very ill at ease, hardly knew what to do. The two men sitting so silently outside the bars got on to my nerves and I felt that I would scream. I went up to him and putting my hand on his shoulder said, "Felix, you want to see me?" He looked up, and slowly recognition came into his face. I

said again, this time in French, "You sent for me, Felix; what can I do for you?" He got up and moved over to his cot and motioned me to sit down on the stool he had just vacated. He sat a while and then began walking up and down, up and down the narrow cell, still without a word. "Felix, tell me, tell me why did you send for me?" Finally he straightened up and stretching out his arms as if throwing a load from him, said, "I don't know, Miss Smith—I just wanted to see you—Just wanted to talk to some one who knew—her. Who would understand—It's my last night, you know,—and I want to talk of her. I must—I must—I must." He sat down on the cot, put his head in his hands and sat there quietly, broodingly,—the picture of misery—of ignorant misery. I went up to him and put my arms about him as I would have a child. I had known him and Claire for the last four years; known their life thoroughly, with its quarrels, its occasional gaieties and its miseries. Claire had been one of my first friends in the quarter

and had come to me with her troubles with the police, and I had often taken her in, when her arguments with Felix reached the serious stage of being locked out. Except for her occasional trips to the Island I saw her every day, and it was a shock and a great sorrow when I read that Felix had in a moment of passion shot her.

I watched him awhile, as he moved up and down his cell, now sitting down, now walking, now going to the bars, and standing there listlessly.

"Felix, tell me all about it. Tell me about you and Claire. Why, *Why*—did you do it? Tell me, Felix, Why did you?"

After a long silence he said, "Yes, I'll tell you all about it. You'll understand. You've lived in Paris, and you've lived here in the quarter, and you've known us a long time. It will take up time—and—and—I don't want to be alone," turning to the silent men outside the door, "with them.

"You know, Miss Smith, I didn't kill her in cold blood, as the papers said. I thought it all

out, and there wasn't anything else to do. You know, I think I cared for Claire all my life. I remember when I first saw her. My mother had been a woman of the streets, and when she got old, like most of them in Paris, she went down to the Halles and sold vegetables. When I was about seven years old, she took up with a man in the Abattoir, whose business was to skin dead animals. Claire was his little girl. I remember how happy I was, when she was brought home. She was an awful pretty little thing, and I had to take care of her all day. Mother and Claire's father used to go to work every morning and leave us alone. We played in the streets; we got our meals whenever and wherever we could, and we never came back to the room, until we were ready to go to sleep. When Claire was about six, mother put her in a school, and I went off and on to school, going when I had to, and staying away and picking up odd sous at work around the Halles, whenever I got the chance. I still had all the care of Claire. I think I've

dressed her every morning of her life since she was two years old. I used to see she was clean when she went to school, and I used to beat her, when I found she didn't go. I felt, if it is possible for a boy to feel it, as if she were my little girl, my baby, and it was a good thing that some one did take care of her, because neither my mother nor her father paid any attention to either of us.

"She was hard to manage; had the devil of a temper and was bound to have her own way. She would bite and scratch and fight over the slightest going against her will, but after it was all over with, she was always willing to make up.

"I don't know how old we were, when we drifted to being more to each other than brother and sister. Every one we knew was crooked. All the friends of my mother were women who had grown old in the business. All the men who came to see Claire's father lived with women like my mother—or worse. My friends were Apaches, you know what

they are, thieves, pickpockets, strong-arm men, and all of them lived off women. It was the common accepted fact of my life. Every one did it. I really didn't know there was an outside world, where the women were not prostitutes who were beaten by their men if they didn't bring home enough money. I am not saying this to excuse myself, Miss Smith, I am just trying to show you how naturally Claire and I drifted into the life.

"I remember when she brought me her first piece of money. She came in laughing, with a pretty color in her cheeks, she was only a little kid then, and threw me down a louis and said, 'What do you think of that, Felix, what do you think of that?' I don't know what came over me then; I'd always known it would happen some day, but it just made me sick. I looked at the louis a long time; then I caught her by the throat, and beat her until I was tired. She was hurt—brutally hurt—that I should beat her, when she had only intended to please me. Every one she knew

brought money to the man they loved, so why shouldn't she bring it to me. After a few days, I accepted the fact, and I expected a certain amount each day. When she brought it to me, I was satisfied, when she did not bring it, I beat her.

"We went with a crowd of boys and girls like ourselves; laughed, drank and were gay. Sundays we would go out into the country or to the Bois, and have picnics. Saturday nights we all went to some theater that gave us the things we wanted, and there are lots of them in Paris. We want tragedies that make your blood boil, or else songs that leave nothing to the imagination. Then there are the cafés for us,—cafés where you see cut deep in the tables names of men who have been guillotined, who have been sent to the colonies, or who have been imprisoned for life for crimes that would make you sick to even hear about them. We always drank to these men, they were our heroes. I followed the rest in that as in everything else, why I don't know. I

presume because it was supposed to be the manly thing to do.

"We lived the life for about six years, sometimes up and sometimes down; sometimes with money and sometimes without. Claire got arrested several times and had two doses of St. Lazar. I got six months for being with a crowd who held up a man, and I decided I was too well known to the police, so I went over to London for a while, and took Claire with me. There business was bad. The rich women get along all right, but there's too many common ones. While I was there I met a man from America. You know him—one-arm Maurice. He had to leave Paris. Got in some kind of a stabbing scrape, and it was too hot for him. Well, he had a woman working for him in New York, and had come over after another one he knew in London. He told me money was easy in America; that all one had to do was to stand in with the police, and with a bright pretty girl like Claire, I could make a fortune. I decided to come.

" We had a hard time getting past the immigration, but Claire looked so decent, and I spoke good English, so we got in. We lived at the French Club for a while, and Claire worked in a house. And then for about six months she was puller-in for a big French House. What's that? Oh, they take a pretty fresh girl, send her out in the street to attract the men. She picks up a man, gets him to come to the house, takes him inside the door, where he is surrounded by a lot of women, then she slides back to the street to try it all over again. The only trouble is there's too much walking for the money. 'Tisn't worth it. So we took a room and she worked the street. God, what a lot o' women walk—from 23rd St. to 42nd—up and down—up and down. Any of us would die. But there's no use telling you our life. You saw it all every day: how she got pulled every so often, sometimes the Island, more often a fine: how we fought like cats and dogs over fool things—but—take it all in all—I think we were pretty happy.

"We were not like most of the men and their women. I stuck to Claire, and she to me, except in a matter of business. I suppose if I was a different kind of a man, I would say I loved her. I did in my way and she loved me. Not in the way you people love. That'd be tame to us. We lived hard, we fought hard, and we loved hard. Yes, I know I often beat the life out of her, yet she deserved it. It was the only thing to do to her. I was bound she would not drink; I was bound she would not go to the low-down dance halls; I was bound that, except in a matter of business, she would be clean. I wouldn't let her monkey around the other men like me. Course, they said, it was because I was afraid I would lose her, and that she was a good money-maker, but it wasn't all that. She'd been with me ever since I could remember. I'd taken care of her. I knew her thoroughly; knew her cussedness, her bad temper, her passions and—I knew the other side of her too—the side that no

one saw but me. I was bound she would not get like some of the other women—drunken low down sots only made to be beaten and finally kicked in the gutter.

"I don't remember when Claire met Felipe. She didn't tell me. I didn't find it out, until I saw them talking together one day in the street. Something went cold inside of me. He was the most low down pup in America. He'd been in every nasty scrape in Paris, and didn't dare to go back. He'd lived off women for years; he never done an honest day's work in his life. He had two women working for him now, and a woman who worked for him only lasted a couple of years, 'cause she only meant to him so many dollars and cents; but there was something about him that women liked—and when I saw my Claire laughing and chatting with him like pals, I tell you I was dead sore. I asked her about him that night, and she simply laughed, and said she'd only known him a little while, and if I didn't want her to, she wouldn't talk to him any more.

I told her what he was, and she promised 'pon honor that she'd cut him out.

" Well things went along all right for about six months, when I heard some women in Duffy's saloon talking about Felipe and Claire. It seems they were together most of the time. I asked her again about him that night, and she lied to me and said she had not seen him. I believed her and was all broke up, when I walked into Blasberg's and saw her sitting in his back room drinking an absinthe with Felipe. Now that wasn't like my Claire; she was no boozer. I'd seen to that. I went up to their table and sat down. Felipe looked scared, but Claire just laughed and was sassy. That night I talked with her again, and she would not listen to reason. Seemed to be fascinated by the brute. I showed her what a beast he was—how everybody in the quarter knew what he was, knew him and what he'd done; how he'd practically killed two women. She'd heard it all before. How he'd use a woman as long as he could make money off

her, then kick her out to the hospital when she got sick. I even showed her my bank book. Showed her how in a little while we could go back to Paris, and set up a little café and live half decent. I'd quite a lot of money,—you know this trial of mine has cost me $3,000, Miss Smith—and at that she kind of seemed to be sorry. She promised me she'd leave him alone. For the first time in my life I didn't really believe her.

"I think she tried to get rid of him, but he knew her beat, and would watch for her, and she seemed to be just drawn to him. And she took to drinking, and sitting round talking rot with women, and doing all the things I'd kept her from for years. I didn't know what to do. I could see her getting away from me day by day. I thought first I'd kill him, then I knew if I did I'd be hung, then some other man would get hold of Claire, and she'd be in just as bad a fix as ever. I was afraid for her, 'cause she ain't got no sense—just a big, loving, jolly girl,

and if a good-for-nothing pup like Felipe got hold of her, she would go straight to Hell.

"I don't know when I first got the idea of killing her. I used to sit and figure it out, and wonder what to do and if I could get her away. But she refused point blank to leave New York, and finally one night she said she would go with Felipe—she was tired of me; that I was slow; I didn't give her any good times; wouldn't let her drink, and that she had a right to a good time; that she worked hard and gave me all her money, but out of working hours, she ought to be allowed to do as she pleased; that Felipe was gay and jolly and no crank like I was, and that she'd fully determined to go to him. Well, I asked her to give me a month before she left me. Some way in the night a complete plan came into my mind—not step by step like something you think out, but it came in a minute. It was as simple as taking a walk. It didn't seem doubtful nor desperate, simply an ordinary thing that had to be. I went over and

over the matter all the days, and there was only one thing they said to me: 'Don't let Felipe have Claire.' The last night of the month she came home. I had one hope left me—that perhaps she'd changed her mind. I asked her if she'd go away with me—go to Chicago, San Francisco or back to Paris—anywhere to get away from Felipe. She was soft and sweet and nice to me, and said, 'Felix, I'm going to Felipe. I don't know what he's done to me, but I can't help it; I'm going to him.'

"I sat there and looked at her, and I could see her as she would be in three or four years —broken—old—a drunkard—perhaps worse yet—a dope fiend, and I could see that devil beat her if she didn't bring in enough money, and I just couldn't stand it. She was *my* Claire. I'd had her all my life, it seemed to me, and although she was on the street for me, I loved her in a way. I know you will say a brutal way, but it's the only way I know, and I tried to keep her as decent as I knew

'how, so I said to her, 'Well, Claire, we'll be good friends to-night, and we won't think of to-morrow;' and she kissed me, and we had a jolly evening, and when she went to sleep, I did the only thing there was to do. . . .

"It seemed to me an eternity before she went to sleep. Across the street in No. 14, a woman was singing—one of the Italian women. I don't know much about music, but I know that tune—I hear it every night in my sleep, and wake up in a sweat. It was so damnably silly—that soft pretty thing being sung there in that room, perhaps ending at some man's lips, and I lying there waiting—waiting—waiting for Claire to sleep. I didn't want to scare her and I didn't want to hurt her. 'After awhile the singing stopped, and then Claire slept. . . .

"Oh, I see her every night, Miss Smith. I feel her head against my shoulder; I feel her breath in my neck," and stretching out his arms, "Oh God, Oh God, my arms ache for her, but——Hell, they won't long."

And he rose from the cot, strode furiously to the bars of the cell-door, and, grasping them in both hands, shook it like a wild animal, "Here, you," speaking to the death watch outside, "You promised me champagne to-night,—well, I want it."

## IV.

"I BET you can't guess where I been!"

"No—wher've you been? In the country?"

"No. No use giving you three guesses 'cause you wouldn't think of it in a thousand years. I been to Auburn Prison."

"Why, Rosalie, what in the world have you been doing there? I thought——"

"Yes, I know you think for a person that's been to the workhouse as often as I have, that I wouldn't visit a Government boarding-house just for fun. But—well, don't tell the rest, but I been going there to visit a friend of mine. She's been up three years and I go up once every two months—if I got the price."

"Who is she, Rosalie?"

"Why, Marie Gautier; don't you remem-

ber her? She killed her man—the dirty brute —three years ago, shot him on the street."

"Yes, I do remember her; but, Rosalie, she's a French girl, and I thought you Americans didn't mix with the French girls."

"So we don't—they're all low; but I met her on the Island four years ago."

I laughed. "Surely that should be a tie!"

"It's funny, ain't it, how you cotton to some people? Now, we work all day, scrubbing or something, and at night five of us are locked in a cell together. Well, Marie was in the cell with me, and she was so nice and quiet I liked her. The others I couldn't bear. One was old Alice—you know her—a regular bum, and the other was the funniest old woman! Took dope, and she was almost dotty without it. I used to be so sorry for her. She couldn't sleep—would jerk all over; kept us awake at night to hold her hand, so things wouldn't get her. But she got better after a while, and if she'd been kept there for the rest of her life, she'd a been cured. The other

little girl was the sweetest little thing! She was French, same as Marie—a little red-haired girl, with hair like gold, and great big eyes. She was only up for a little while, and she cried all the time—the first time you know, and the bars scared her. I think she'd a been straight when she left, if some one could a got her away from the man who was living off her. She was so scared! Well, I was going to tell you about Marie. She'd been there about a month when I came in; she was little and sick, and couldn't speak much English, and I don't know no French, but we sort of understood each other. I didn't see at first why she didn't cuss like the rest of us at being sent up; but she didn't mind at all—seemed sort of glad—and when I knew her better, I could understand. It was the rest cure for her. Poor devil! She's had a good long one this time."

"Go on, Rosalie, tell me about her. I remember the papers were full of the affair at the time; but I've forgotten most of it——"

"You know, you get to know a person pretty well in five months, and we were pals from the first. She told me all about herself. You know, these French girls are funny—they don't seem to have good horse sense; they let everybody run 'em in a way we American girls wouldn't stand for. I suppose it's because they can't speak English, and they feel kind of helpless. I suppose I'd be the same in France, where I couldn't speak the lingo, and would have to believe all that's told me. I remember one night, when the lights were out, she lay on my bunk and talked to me till way in the night.

"It seems she worked in a box factory in Paris; and at night, when the factories shut down, there are always a lot of men waiting around to see the girls. And the girls are flirty and like to have a good time. You can't blame 'em. Remember they work all day and get mighty little money for it—wages ain't big there as here—and the only time they have to play is at night; and to

any girl having a good time means having a fellow to take you around—it's only natural. Well, all the girls used to flirt with the fellows hanging 'round, and Marie done the same as the rest. One night there was a nice-looking guy there, and he picked her out. She let him go nearly home with her, and then he met her every night, and she got dead stuck on him. He said he'd marry her and all that rot. This went on for quite a while, when one day they met a man and woman who had been in America. They talked to Felix, and he decided to bring her to America. She found out afterwards that he had intended selling her to a house at Port St. Denis. That was his business, getting nice working girls, breaking them in and selling them to houses. He told her he got $100 for a pretty one and $50 for an ordinary one. But this man and woman were in business in New York, and they told him he could make more off her in New York; that she could turn him in at least ten dollars a day. Well, put that in French money

and it sounds big, and he decided to come.

"Now, mind you, Marie didn't know nothing of all this; she thought he was all straight and the finest man in the world. She kicked at leaving her folks, but he promised to marry her as soon as they were in Havre. Then when she was in Havre, he said he couldn't do it till he got to New York, as it wouldn't be legal if done there. That's why I say these French girls are such darned fools. Now, I'd 'a' smelt a rat, if all that con talk had been thrown into me, but she came along like a little lamb. She said he was different on the ship; he showed himself and she got scared, but there was no one to talk to but the other man and woman and a girl they were bringing over. He wouldn't let her get acquainted with any other people. Well, they talked to her and talked to her, and Felix showed her how they would soon be rich, and he'd set up a good business and marry her, and she didn't know what to do. They told her if she'd make a row, she'd be arrested and sent back to

France, and she was afraid to go back home and not be married. And then, too, she'd be ashamed to see all her folks and the girls from the factory, and have them see she'd been fooled by the man she'd been so proud of. So she was bullied into everything they wanted her to do.

"They landed in the morning and that afternoon she was put in a house—cheap, common, dollar joint; the house got half, of course. And she paid two dollars a day to work there and a dollar a day to the housekeeper. Then she and Felix had a room and board at the French club, and that cost two dollars a day, and she had to turn in ten dollars every night to him. That means thirty customers a day. She worked from eleven o'clock to three in the morning—fifteen hours. It must 'a' been an awful life, and it near killed her. This easy money went to Felix's head, and he saw himself soon becoming a bloated millionaire, so he got another girl—little thing called Claire. Marie didn't know

where he picked her up. He got to thinking why shouldn't he have all the money, instead of divying with a landlady, so he got a flat, and put 'em in it. He got so mean and afraid they'd nig on him that he made a little hole in the doors and filled it with wax, and then would watch to see how much money the girls got. He even took their luck money.

"It was then she was pinched. Claire got away but Marie didn't try to. She was sick and discouraged, and the most downright unhappy woman I ever see. I asked her why in the devil she didn't clear out—tell him to go plumb to, but she didn't know how; she couldn't talk; didn't know no one except the girls and a few fellows, and she didn't dare talk to them. They'd tell Felix. And the other men she met didn't want to hear her troubles. Then she was afraid of him. He used to beat the life out of her, and told her if she left he'd kill her; he could do it in America, and he wouldn't have his head cut off. Just filled her full of stuff to keep her scared. And then—there's

another side, too, Miss Smith, that we don't think of. These poor devils have no one to really care for them; they're homesick and lonesome, and between lickings their men do pet 'em and he and their room away from their business means home, and they put up with the abuse, and work as hard as they can to turn in enough money to get what all women hunger for—a little lovin'."

She was quiet for a long while, and I took the chance to make a cup of coffee and butter some rolls, and pulled up a small table by her chair and gave it to her. She looked up and said, "Thank you, Miss Smith; you sure are good to us girls." She sipped the coffee slowly, seeming to have forgotten our subject. Finally I said: "Go on, Rosalie. What became of Marie? Did you see her after she left the Island?"

"Yes; her time was up a month before mine, and she had made up her mind that she'd get away. She didn't know where to go, but she was bound to do something. She felt rested

and strong and had had time to think, 'cause when you work like she did you're too tired to think what you want to do; you can't decide nothing—your body's so tired you just don't care. Well, she'd rested for six months and she did look pretty the day she left. I gave her a letter to a friend of mine that would 'a' been square with her, and I wanted her to go see a probation officer, who's been good to me and would 'a' helped her, but she said she'd try the friend first. The probation officer meant the police, and she was just naturally kind of scary of them. She promised to let me know through my friend where she was, and she went away. Well, that last month seemed a year—I was lonesome. The girl they put in Marie's place was an old-timer who's main idea of amusement was rotten stories, and she fair made me sick. I just hated the sight of her! But everything has an end, and finally my day came, and I saw Broadway again. Gee! it does seem nice to see the old streets and the lights and the crowd, all tickled

to see you, and all giving you the glad hand. Well, I lived, I can tell you, for a while, and I sort of forgot Marie. Wondered once in a while where she was, as she hadn't showed up to the probation officer, nor to my friend. I slid around the same old way for quite a while —then almost got another dose of the Island. Now, I don't mind it once in a while, but I don't want to live there, so I rather settled down in my ways—for me.

"I guess I was out a year when one day I was setting in Fagan's back room, tanking up a little with a couple of fellows and some girls, when in walked Nellie Mayo, white as a sheet. She was right behind Felix when Marie shot him; said she came up just as cool and quiet and shot him, then let the police take her. She wasn't rattled nor nothin'.

"I was all broke up. It all came back to me—what she'd told me about how she wanted to get away, and how she hated the life; and I wondered how he'd got her again. I wanted to go and see her in the Tombs, but I saw it

wouldn't do her no good to have me as a friend, so I waited until she got her sentence. I knew then it wouldn't make no difference, and I went to see her in Auburn. You must 'a' read the trial—the papers talked a lot about it.

"Well, first visitin' day I was there—and I go every time I can. Poor devil! She sure's been up against it."

"But, Rosalie, I thought she was going to get away from Felix, when she left the Island?"

"I asked her about that, Miss Smith, and she told me that when she got about half-way over on the boat, Felix and two fellows from the club came up on deck and she had to go with him. Search me, I don't know why! She don't know herself, but she says she couldn't help herself and she had to go.

"She lived the old life for a year—sick, miserable, hatin' the days and worse hatin' the nights. She couldn't see nothin' else ahead of her. She wanted to kill herself, but she

was religious and afraid of God, or Hell, or something—so she killed him. She said it was the only way, and she's not sorry.

"Now, Miss Smith, I came right straight from her to you, 'cause I want you to figure out some way to help her. She's out next month, and there's a couple of men are going to make a bold play to get her back. And she's such a fool, and she don't know no one but me. I'm scared for her. Don't you know some one who'll take her, or get her out in the country? Not in any other big city, because the club would send to the French club there and she'd be spotted—but to some little place that they wouldn't think of?

"Now, an old one like me," and she came and put her hand on my shoulder, laughing half gayly, half wistfully, into my face, "*I* don't need help—I can take care of myself. I'm in the life for keeps; and there's *so* many of us that if a girl wants to be straight, I say, for God's sake, let's help her."

## V.

HALF a dozen chorus girls from the smaller theaters were in the laundry washing out their tights and stockings, ironing handkerchiefs, and doing in general the little things they couldn't do in their hall bedrooms. When I found they were about through, I called them up to have a cup of coffee and they came a jolly, laughing bunch, chewing gum and talking all at the same time. After a while of ordinary gossip, one girl said:

"Say, girls, I was to a funeral yesterday."

"Oh, beat it," interrupted Kitty. "Who wants to hear about funerals?"

"But, girls," persisted Sadie, "you know the girl. It was Ferris's Billy."

"What," shouted all six, "Pony Billy"?

"Yes, Pony Billy. Say, Miss Smith, don't

you remember her? She was the littlest girl in the ponies. She was the cutest little thing. Girls, do you remember when we were with 'The Beauty and the Beast'? Wasn't she a darling?"

They all talked at once, telling of her wonders as a pony and especially as the smallest pony in the ballet.

"Why," went on Sadie, "Ferris used to put her on his shoulder and dance with her, and at dinner parties they used to toss her like a ball from one to the other, and the men would put gold pieces in her stockings. She was out to supper nearly every night; straight too, except for Ferris; was dead stuck on him. They used to want her to do special stunts at dinner parties, and paid her big money, but she wouldn't do nothing that Ferris didn't know about, and she would never do stunts that wasn't decent. She sure was on the square with him, and they were dotty about each other. *Didn't* she have a good time—Gee—She was in all the good shows, and everybody

knew her and liked her, and the Johnnies used to send her flowers and candy, and the old guys sent her jewelry sometimes, but she didn't care for none of 'em.

"Do you girls remember when the wire broke? Say, it was awful, Miss Smith. She was one of the flying ballet, and just as they gave her the first swing the wire broke and she fell half on the stage and half in the orchestra. We thought she was dead, but it was only something the matter with her back. They took her to the hospital, and she was there 'most a year. We all kind of lost track of her, and didn't know she came out lame and sick. The woman who owned the sort of actor's boarding house, a cheap joint, you know, told me yesterday about it. She couldn't work and got sicker and sicker, and for a while Ferris come to see her, then he stopped and used to send a servant, and finally only a letter, and then nothin' at all. She was awfully hard up, didn't have nothin', and the people in the house used to club together and pay her board,

'cause she was so pretty and little, and they were sorry for her. One day she asked the woman I talked to, to go to Ferris's house, and give him a letter. The woman went but a servant wouldn't let her in. She left the letter, and Billy waited several days for an answer but none came, and finally the woman went again, and the servant said he had given the letter to Ferris, but he said there was no answer, and his master mustn't be troubled again.

"It broke poor Billy up, and she'd just lay and cry and cry, and finally she just died. The woman said she didn't know what to do. Billy hadn't a cent for weeks, and the people in the boarding-house were all poor, and she hated to see her buried by the city, so she went to the man's house and raised such a row, they had to let her in. They threatened to call the police, and she told them it was just what she wanted them to do; she had fine things to say to them about the Honorable Mr. Ferris's treatment of poor sick girls. Well, he

must have heard her, 'cause he came out of a room (and say, girls, who do you think was with him? Long Alice, the great big truck horse). He came out kind of scared and asked what was the matter. The woman told him what it was, and told him if he didn't pony up good and fine, she'd make him trouble. She'd talk. She'd get the reporters after him, and say—didn't he come to time? He didn't come to see poor Billy,—But Gee!—girls, it was a swell funeral. She was just covered in roses."

## VI.

I COULD see that Molly was becoming terribly scared and excited and that she was on the verge of hysterics. The District Attorney kept asking one question after another in his sharp abrupt manner that was fast getting on her nerves. She watched him in a fascinated way, and finally broke out half crying,—

"Mr. Attorney, if you wouldn't point that pencil at me, and ask me so many questions, I could tell you all about it."

He talked with the men helping him, and looked at his papers.

"All right. Perhaps that's best. Now, where were we? Let's see. You said there were eleven girls and two men. By the way, who were the men?"

"Fred Shrub and Tony Filipo."

"Who are they?"

"Oh, simply two fellows who were hangin' around. One was Minnie's man and the other was his friend."

"What were you doing?"

"We were just settin' 'round talkin' and foolin' and playin' cards. Puttin' in time till somethin' was doin'."

"You say you were lying around. Tell what happened. Tell the whole thing."

"The door opened and a man come in. We thought it was a customer and most of us looked up. Nell didn't, because she was expectin' a regular friend, and it wasn't time for him yet. She kept on with the cards."

"Where was she?"

"She was lyin' on her stomach on the floor playin' Canfield."

Molly waited for another question, but as it did not come she went on.

"The man come in, and a couple of us started to go to him. He stopped at the door and looked at us all, and then he saw Nell, and he walked up to her and said, 'Damn you,

and look at me,' and gral
shoulder, and jerked her up
a big chair that was by the t
seem to see us, and we was gla
too paralyzed to move. He
looked at her for a long tin
while he turned, and spit on th
'God! To see you in that rag

"Nell began to get over be
got sore. She pulled her ciga
her stockin', and asked one of
light. Then she leaned back
and started makin' rings. T
menced walkin' up and down t
his hands in his pockets and h
He looked awful. His face wa
his eyes red, as if he had been c
in'

you for six months—I've found you—Now, I'll find him.'

Nell made a sign to Tony and he slid out of the room; 'cause Ted generally blew in about that time to see what was doin', and touch Nell up if she had any money.

"The man didn't notice nothin', and Nell got more sassy and cocky, now she wasn't afraid. She paid no attention at all to him, not half as much as the rest of us did, after we had tumbled to the fact that he was the husband she'd shook for Ted.

"He didn't say nothin' more for a long time, just walked and walked. Once he looked at her, and kind of said between his teeth, 'Poor little kid, I'm damn glad he's dead.' We didn't know what he meant, but I think Nell did, for she looked kind of queer. Finally he stopped in front of her and said, 'Nelly'—and then for the first time he seemed to see us. He looked at us in a funny, slow way for a long time—then said to her, 'Come with me, Nelly, where I can talk with you. I want to

... Molly broke down
started to cry in a quiet,
touched even the Attorney.
time, then said, softly for hi
your time, and tell us what h

"Well, he seemed to go r
white, and then he got all red
his neck came way out, and he s
at her as if he didn't know w
Then all at once he grabbed he
and grabbed Fred's knife off o
we couldn't see what happened,
scream and finally kind of chok

"We all flew. The rest g
house,—but—well—I was Nel
went back—and she lay there,
back with her arms out and h
open—and the gas shone on he
the skin all white—and ...

## VII.

"EDITH, why do men like your—er—friend, love women like you?"

She flushed and looked at me quickly, half angrily, half inquiringly, and I hurried on to say,

"Don't get cross and, yes, keep your cigarette. I have been studying you closely for the last fifteen minutes, and I'm wondering. You're not pretty, your best friend could not call you a beauty. I own you are charming, you dress exquisitely, you have pretty feet, and—well, I don't blame him, but I often wonder what it is. I saw his wife last night at the Opera. She is young and is much more beautiful than you are, dresses just as daintily, and I can't see why he gives you this apartment, the electric coupé, and everything your capricious little heart desires. Let me lie back

leaned back
and puffed slowly at her c
began to be afraid that perh
little bit too far and that s
fended.

"Yes, it is funny, isn't it
of it myself. Yet I know
mostly the wives' fault. The
bands to us just as sure as i
out the door and said, 'Go, m
We have none for you.' You
fully sorry for men. They're
heart, and there isn't one in fift
up little establishments like thi
played the game.

"Look at my Fred. He's
in the world, and he married a
his big heart filled with love

suppose they did. If he missed something in her, he thought it was youth or inexperience, or something that would come. But time went on and she thought about a lot of things beside him, and when he would amble home in the evening, she would be there all right and kiss him in a nice wifely way. But if, after dinner, he got a little more ardent in his admiration than she thought he should, she was insulted; and she would say, 'You don't really love me—*that's* not love!'

"Now he did love her and does still, I think, but her love was altogether too spiritual. She forgot he is a man and that a man's spiritual and physical love are apt to get mixed up—and the woman who wants the one must remember the other—so she lost both; and he took to sitting in his library alone, smoking expensive cigars, and kind of thought that all the dreams he had had were simply dreams, and that perhaps the things dreamed of never existed. Any way he knew they were not for him—and after ten years, ten years of being

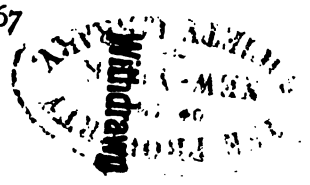
straight with her, he met me—and I hope his dreams have come back. At least, now he knows there is some one who is here when he wants to see her—who does not meet him with a wifely kiss—but it seems to satisfy him, and he is told he is loved. He is petted and jollied and babied. He forgets there is such a thing as stocks and bonds, has no craving for libraries and doesn't care to sit by himself and smoke. Yet, I'm sure I don't love him one-half as much as his wife does; that I wouldn't sacrifice myself for him as she would; that quite likely if he lost his money, I'd say, 'Au revoir, Chéri,' and go my way with no great unhappiness. But I play the game and try to play it square. I take everything from him just as she does, but *I* want to give value received. I make it my *business* to make him happy. When he is coming to me I put on the pretty gowns he loves, the dainty underclothes, and the finest, prettiest silk stockings that I can buy. If he wants a glass of wine, it's ready, and I join him in a 'To you, Sweet-

heart;' if he's tired and just wants to rest, we each sit in our easy-chairs in front of the fire and he reads and I sew or do something that won't bother him. Any way he finds whatever he wants here, and has for seven years. I admit we fight once in a while. My temper is not the best, and Fred's no angel, so things hum up at times, but it's soon over. I say I'm a cross old hen, and when he has cooled down a bit he laughs and makes me promise I'll never do it again, and I promise; and I know and he knows, that it'll all happen again within a month quite likely. But what's the difference? I'm always willing to make up."

She lit another cigarette from the one in her hand, and after smoking a long while in silence, went on:

"What a fool, what a stupid fool the average 'Good woman' is! What love and chances for happiness they throw over their shoulders, because they don't understand and won't learn! They think to show warmth—or intensity—is vulgar, and if they have no—well, we'll call





...ch like me. Think of
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"Just think what it means to s
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a scotch and soda and a good cigar. He knows he's missing the best, but what can he do? There's nothing else for him. Perhaps his loyalty or position or religion won't allow him to set up a little place like this, and he grows old and disgruntled with life, and becomes absorbed in business or takes to collecting manuscripts, or doing something to fill in. He loves his wife in a nice husbandly way as the mother of his children and the head of his home, but she don't make his pulse beat one bit the quicker; and he knows, and she *ought* to know, that in some way they have missed the greatest thing in the world—for it *is* the greatest thing in the world—to love and live with the one you love—and—we know it."

## VIII.

SHE took the baby out of the clothes basket, and set her on the floor. I poured out a cup of tea and she stretched out hands, all steam-soaked and sodden, to take it. We chatted pleasantly for a while about baby, the lack of work and the many subjects we were interested in, until Molly Harris dropped in to have a cup of tea and a romp with the baby. As Molly was leaving, she said:

"Say, Lillian, better not go home; Jim's drinkin' to-night."

All the happiness that had been in her face while watching Molly and the baby, died out, and she settled back in her chair in a tired, discouraged way, that showed she knew what it meant when Jim "was drinkin'." I allowed her to drink her tea in silence for a while, then said:

"You know Molly, Mrs. Parker?" She did not speak for so long a time that I thought perhaps she had not heard my question. Finally she said:

"Didn't you know I was one of the girls, Miss Smith?"

I was truly surprised and showed it, as she carried none of the ear marks of the woman of the streets. Yet I had always wondered who she was, as her face, although not pretty, was one you would notice, and her figure, even in her working clothes and eternally wet apron, was very good. She seemed pleased at my surprise and said:

"I might as well tell you the whole story. I've often wanted to, but, somehow, always got cold feet."

"But, Mrs. Parker," I said, "you could not have been long in the life. You don't show it at all."

"Don't you think so? I was on the street or in the business some way ever since I was sixteen—about ten years; but I've been off

now for nearly two years, and I suppose it makes a difference."

"How did you get out of it? Tell me about it, dear."

She laughed a little apologetic laugh and said:

"You'll think I'm awfully silly, but when I found I was going to have a kid—and God knows I was desperate and done everything—but when I knew that I really could do nothin', it sort of seemed to change things. I used to lie awake at night, and think about what I had read about kids and bein' a mother and such rot, and I thought a lot of things out by myself."

She stopped, and after a long time of looking into the fire went on.

"You know, I'm really married. Jim married me about three years ago. He was a cab driver and worked hard when I first took up with him. He was fine lookin', and a pretty good sort. The first year he wouldn't touch my money, but after that he got acquainted

with some men who had girls, and he began to think it looked easier than workin' all day in the rain and snow, and he got careless and lost his job, and never tried to get another, but simply lived off me. At first we boarded in a house with a lot of women and their men. I paid two dollars a day for board for the two of us, and two dollars and a half a day for a room outside, where I could see my friends, and one dollar a day to the cop; altogether I had to make at least five dollars and a half a day to live. Jim was no worse than other men, but he would booze, and a man that don't work is always gamblin' or findin' some way to spend money that don't cost him nothin'. I couldn't get a cent ahead, so tried the fake tobacco shop. What's that? Oh, a little shop, where one sells tobacco and cigarettes and has a room back of it. It paid very well, as I was opposite a big factory, and had no nosey neighbors, and I kept at it quite a while, but I always kind o' wanted a home. Thought that if I could get Jim away from

I loved to scrub and polish thing
to see people look surprised whe
in. I kept window boxes, and m
were the finest I've ever seen. I
seemed to know I liked 'em, and th
me for my work with 'em. I kno
it, 'cause it was then he married me
to quit the business, but he was
wouldn't work. So I kept on, an
very well until I found out one
goin' to have a kid. When nothin
done, I had to tell Jim—and—well
brute to me for the first time, but
blame him very much, as a baby n
of expense and trouble, and then I g
idea that I wanted to be straight.

"It does seem foolish and—I—I

the kid. It was something mine, that I could love, and I just had to be decent. Jim was bitter and nasty, but some way I didn't seem to mind. I would lie awake half the night thinkin' about the baby; what I would do if it was a boy, and how I would steer her straight if she was a girl, 'cause I knew the ropes, and she wouldn't never be like me.

"I had a little money saved, and we managed to live until Grace was born, when the doctor took about the last of it. When she was a month old, Jim wanted me to give her to some home, but I fought that tooth and nail. She was *my* baby, and I would keep her. So he said it was up to me to do so, and he wanted me to go back to the street, but I wouldn't, and he cut up rough. Well, I tried all kinds of things—addressed envelopes, sewed, and even tried scrubbin' offices, but, somehow, I was no good at any of 'em and couldn't make enough to live. Finally I went to the girls who knew me, told 'em the whole story, and said they must give me their washin',

and every one of 'em backed me up and see that I have work. They sure have been white to me, and I won't forget it.

"Jim is sore most of the time, and I can see it is hard to live on six or eight a week instead of fifty or sixty. I feel it myself—washin' ain't no joke, and—it'll be less of a joke, if I don't get a move on me and finish them waists. Here I've talked for nearly an hour. Thank you for the tea; it did taste good, and I felt all rested. Come, baby, back into the basket with you. Oh, you dear," as she tickled the chuckling mite, "I'd sell you for a million —nit."

## IX.

"HEY, you girls, hurry up. Come along, come along, girls, take you all down, fifty cents apiece. Regular price a dollar. Last car to-night for New York City. Hurry up, hurry up, last car to-night for New York, Forty-second and Broadway. Goin' wit us, girls, hurry up, hurry up. Come on, come on, pile in there, girls. How many are there?"

"New York city, sir?"

"Last car to-night, dollar down."

"Come on, Jim, let us go down in the wagon. All those girls are in the chorus of the Casino here. Let's sit in the back seat here, and listen to them talk; come on, Jim."

"Yes, my dear, but we hadn't better, a little rowdy, you know—you really think you want to? Oh say, I guess we hadn't better."

"Come on, Jim, don't be silly, I'm going to

—two seats please, Mister, the back seat here; come on, Jim."

We settled ourselves comfortably on the back seat and watched the girls coming out of one of the little cheap theaters. They were a jolly laughing bunch, ready for a good time or anything going.

"Hey, girls. Let's jump the rubber-neck wagon. Say, Dorothy, come on, I haven't got fifty cents, but lend it to me, let's take the wagon down. Oh say, Bill," turning to the barker, "take us down for a quarter a piece, won't you?"

"Oh, go on, I know your price is a dollar, but there is such a bunch of us, take us down for a quarter, come on, do."

"I can't do it, girls, regular price is a dollar; this is the last chance to-night. I'll take you down for fifty cents, half price. Well, come along, come along, don't stand there all night, if you are going down in this wagon. How many are you, four, eight, ten, twelve, thirteen. Bad number, better git another one.

All right, fifty cents apiece, give me your money. Say, don't try to nig over there. No dead-heads in this trip. Go along, Charley," speaking to the chauffeur, "and hurry up with that car. Tell 'em number twenty broke down."

"Yes, Charley, go along, Charley," they all sang at him, and we leave Coney behind us. The car goes along at a pace that shows Charley is trying to make up for lost time. He turns corners in a way that sets all the girls to shrieking and makes me wish that I had taken the train back. How a man can drive one of those big cars, keep a cigarette going, and jolly the pretty girl beside him all at the same time, beats me, but Charley did.

"Say, Molly, were you in front to-night? *What* do you think of my new tights! Gee, you don't git enough to eat down here, let alone buyin' socks: If I git another fine, I'll cut the whole darn thing and you'll see me on dear old Broadway.

"Oh, shut up, Dorothy, you're always kick-

in'. Gimme a cigarette. Say, who's got a cigarette? Thanks, now I want a light, Charley, gimme de glim."

"Say, I'm nervous as a hen. I don't know what's the matter with me. Oh, say, let's sing somethin'," and one of the girls started up, "I'm afraid to go home in the dark."

They sang it very prettily. Finally we turned one of the corners, a little too abruptly to suit a big blonde girl who had evidently been drinking too much, and as she lurched back to her place, she said, "Hic, Charley, you call yourself a chau—chauf—eur. I bet you drove a dump cart." Charley took his cigarette from his mouth and politely said, "Shut up, you're drunk."

"Oh, girls, he says I'm drunk, I'm goin' to lick him. Lemme at him, I'm g——"

"Set down, and shut up, Margery. What's the matter with you. Set *down.*"

"A'right. 'Oh I wish I was in Dixie Land,'" and she sings away to herself cheer-

fully, forgetting Charley and her desire for his blood.

"As I was sayin'," spoke up a pretty voice, "if you'll only let me talk, I think they put up a bum show down here. They work you like a dog, and you only get ten per. If I'd only saved my little dough I made last winter, I'd be doin' the high society in Atlantic City."

"Say, girls, I've got the dandiest bathing suit, but that's about all I have got this summer, and I can't very well sachet up and down Broadway in that."

"Oh, say you, you sitting over there, haven't you just been to the Island?"

"Aw, go on, mind your business, who's steppin' on your toes."

"Well, don't get huffy. Half of 'em in the car has been there some time of their life."

"Say, Maud, ain't you ashamed. What's it to you where a lady's been. Seems to me you ain't got an awful lot of sense——"

"Well, anyway," sings some girl with a pretty voice, "this is better than scrubbin' on

the Island, the Island, the Island. Aw, gimme a cigarette, some o' you."

"Oh, Molly Harris, you, who'd you think is back in the company? Little May."

"No. Really?"

"Yes, sir. I was struck blind to see her when she showed up at rehearsal. Gee, the little devil looks bad."

"Where's the kid?"

"I ast her and she said her mother's keepin' it. But her mother's poor, and she sends down three per week to help out."

"Say, you don't mean May Daly?"

"Yes, she's the one, she used to be with us at Miner's. You remember her, don't you?"

"Why, I thought she got hold of that rich stockbroker?"

"So she did, crazy about him. Really I never see a girl go daffy over a man as she did over that fellow."

"Oh, yes, I used to go and see 'em in their flat. Wasn't she a fool about him."

"And when the kid come—say, did any of

youse ever see the baby? Well, that was the finish. May got just like a Jersey cow. Wouldn't go nowhere, wouldn't do nothin'. Just wanted to stay home and moon over that kid. They were together about four years and I used to say to her, May, you're making an awful fool of yourself. He'll never marry you, you're too soft. He's too sure of you. He's always been a chaser, and he wants a run for his money. Well, it come just as I said it would. He got tired of her and took up with that big blonde in the front row at Weber and Shields."

"Ain't it too bad. Is she sore at him?"

"I don't know. She won't talk about it. She cries a lot and, Gee, she looks bad. She won't hold her job long, I'm afraid, and then I don't know what she'll do. I guess it'll be the street for her."

"Why don't she work the stockbroker?"

"Why, girls, don't you understand, she was stuck on him. She didn't want his dough."

"Aw, any girl's a fool who don't work 'em

for all they're worth, when they've got the chance. I'd like to see myself thrown out after four years and with a kid on my hands. I'd make somebody set up and take notice."

"Say, you there," as we go over a rough piece of road at a pace that don't suit some of the girls. "Ain't you trying to do funny stunts with this ice wagon? Gee, I want to see Broadway again, I do. Broadway, dear old Broadway, give my regards to Broadway."

"Shut up, you girls, you ain't hurt yet. Stop yellin' and gimme a cigarette," says Charley.

"Say, for Heaven's sake, give the gentleman a cigarette. Perhaps he'll swallow it and —Aw say, all my cigarettes is gone. You grafters, you. You ought to pay me two bits anyway, the way I've ponied up smoke for you on this trip."

"Oh, I wish I had a hundred million dollars, dollars," piped up some girl.

"What'd you do with it if you had?"

"I don't know—I wonder." And a pretty,

tiny little brown girl put her hands over her head and tried to figure out the spending of one hundred million dollars. After a while when everybody else had forgotten the subject, she drawled:

"I know what I'd do. I'd go out in the country and lay down in the grass and look up at the sky for a week, and try to forget there was ever such a damnable place as Coney."

"Oh, come off, Mildred. Coney's all right. You'd git flies in your ears, if you did all that."

"To Hell with Coney, I'm tired of it. Tired of the lights and the noise and the barkers, and the bum dirty joints where we have to work, and the men that come sizing us up to see if we're worth their trouble. I hate 'em. I'm tired of it all, and some day I'm goin' to cut it."

"How you goin' to cut it, Mildred?"

"Don't be silly. It's better than slingin' hash. I like it, if they'd pay decent."

"Aw don't you worry, you won't cut it till you're too old and the old man don't want you no more. None of us does."

"I am, girls, I am. I won't stay on the thing longer than I can help."

"Never mind, Mildred," spoke up some one in a soothing voice, "some day some old guy will git stuck on you, then you'll have a flat, or perhaps a house on Fifth Avenoo. Heh?"

"If he don't mosey along soon, it's the East River or the Salvation Army for me."

"Shut up, Mildred, you're all right, you been drinkin' too much lately."

"Well, who wouldn't drink? I'm tired, I'm tired! Hell, I'm tired I tell you, I'm tired!" and she starts to cry.

The girls nearby try to soothe her, but a little girl two seats away says:

"I'll come to you, Milly," and she climbs over and changes places with the girl next to her. She takes Mildred's head on her shoulder

in a mothering way that shows she has had a lot of it to do lately.

"Never mind, old girl, we know you are tired. You shouldn't have tanked up to-day. Keep quiet, dear, keep quiet. Sh, Sh, they're lookin at you."

"Cheese it, you in front," sings out the big blonde. "What's the matter wid the lady?"

Mildred's friend turned around, her face tense with anger.

"That's enough from you, my friend. I'm 'tending to this case."

"Aw go on, she's got the jams."

"Well, sposin' she has. You've got past the stage where you can get 'em. You're pickled. But," and a sudden anger coming over her, "She's my friend, and by God, I don't want nothin' from you."

At that all the girls quiet down, and one turning to the blonde says,

"Lu is right. You shut up, d'you *hear?*"

And there was quiet for a while, only broken

by the sobbing of Mildred and the soft hush, hush, of her friend.

We go quietly along for a couple of miles then some girl starts up, "Meet me in Rose Time, Rosie," and all the girls join in, and sing quietly and softly until we turn into Broadway. They chat among themselves a little, but not in the same noisy, boisterous way. The girl's half hysterical raving seems to have made some of them think of their own little tragedies, and that life on the stage is not really so beautiful and gay as they had imagined. Each one had found out to her cost that the life of the cheap chorus girl is at the best a life of misery and hard work, if she is decent, and a few hours of gayety and hard work, if she is not.

As we neared 42nd Street, Mildred's friend began to coax her to sit up.

"Set up, dearie, set up, we're near home. The boys are waitin' for us. Had you rather go home? Guess we'd better go home. Let's

not go to Churchill's to-night. You're tired, we'll go home. Hey, Charley, let us off here."

She straightened Mildred's hat, took a powder puff from her stocking and powdered her nose, tucked some straggling locks back, and they got out. As they stood for a moment in the street, Mildred drew her arm across her eyes and looking up, half laughing, half crying, said:

"Girls, was I a fool to-night? Never mind, I'll wear diamonds yet. Hey, Charley, Ta-ta."

And they were gone.

## X.

"For God's sake, Miss Smith, give me a drink. I'm all in."

I gave one look at the white drawn face and went for the brandy; it was no time for ideas of temperance. Minnie took the drink at a gulp, and after a while a little color came into her cheeks, and her hands stopped twitching. She would not sit down but walked up and down the floor, crying and wringing her hands.

"May, little May's killed herself—yes, she has: I just seen her. She was lyin' on the bed, and she's dead."

"But, Minnie," I said, "I saw her this afternoon."

"I don't care, she's dead, I just seen her. I was with her, and I went away, and she took poison. Oh, what'll I do, what'll I do?"

"Now, look here, dear. Sit down, sit down."

I took her by the shoulders and pushed her into a chair where she sat for a moment, then jumped up and began walking up and down the floor again.

"Now, Minnie, listen to me. Take this tea and drink it. I know you feel badly; little May was your chum. What was the matter?"

"I don't know, Miss Smith. She was always kind o' dotty, always mad happy or away down in the dumps; she never got half way. And just think—now she's dead—I seen her—she's dead——"

Here Minnie started to cry again. I persuaded her to sit down, and I sat on the arm of the easy-chair and took her head against me and let her have her cry. After a while she became quiet, and I said:

"Do you want to tell me about May, Minnie, or would you rather not now?"

I thought perhaps it would help her to talk, and finally she began:

"I've knowed May such a long time, knowed her when she was in the chorus and straight. I used to be a pony myself you know. I remember when she joined us. She was so funny, wouldn't drink beer, and wouldn't have nothin' to do with a girl if she's crooked —when her chum thought life with an automobile was better than darnin' her own stockings, May nearly had a fit. But, after a year or so of going on street cars and eatin' in Childs, she gave up the game. You can say what you please, Miss Smith, it's darned hard to keep straight, when every one you know is drinkin' champagne and wearin' diamond garter buckles, and all you have to do is to give a little nod, and you can go one better than your friends.

"Anyway, it was too much for May and she got into the procession, and when she started, she started for good. She had a good time same as she did everythin'—for all 'twas worth.

"At first she had a mighty nice man, a real

gentleman, but he was a sport, and liked to see May goin' it strong. But after a time she got too much for him, and one fine day he gave her the lease of the flat and a check, and sailed for Europe. That's the time I went to live with her—and we sure did have some fine old times—and—and—now she's dead, she's dead, Miss Smith. I seen her lyin' on the bed—and——"

Minnie started again to cry and wring her hands. I said nothing but softly stroked her hair, and after a time she went on.

"Where was I? Oh, yes, at the flat. Sometimes she was so good and nice, you would never think her the high roller she was, and she was good to her folks—sent them money every month, and Christmas she used to buy fleece-lined slippers, and flannel night dresses, and such things and send home to her grandmother. She had awful nice lovin' ways, and every one liked her, and she had lots of money and presents given her. But she was careless; if one man gave her diamonds, quite

likely her next man would pawn 'em. Money didn't seem to count like it does with some of us. . . .

"Then all at once she up and went to Europe with a fellow, and I didn't see her for two years."

"But, Minnie, how did she get in the house across the street?"

"It's funny, ain't it? I don't know why she came. I was in the business regular, a long time before she was, and I was knocked silly, when Flora (that's the Madam, the old slob) told us one day that Little May was comin' to live with us. I couldn't believe it —but I think Flora got her in one of her blue streaks, and talked her into it. I went to see and tried my best to talk her out of it, but she was up against it some way, and had hocked nearly everythin' she owned, and come she would.

"She's done mighty well, has got her rings and things out of hock and bought out Flora's

partner. She can't help but do fine. She was so nice, you couldn't help but like her."

I saw the nerves coming again and tried to head them off.

"But then why did she do this, dear?"

Minnie was quiet for a long time, then said:

"I don't know as I ought to tell you, perhaps she wouldn't like it—none of the rest know anythin' about it—but you won't tell, and I guess she won't care you know it. She was in love with a fellow. No, not the way most of us is in love, but true love. She never had cared for no one at all until a couple of months ago—do you suppose she cares I tell you, Miss Smith?"

I assured her that it would not trouble May, and the story went on.

"A couple of months ago a fellow came in with a party, a rather nice oldish man—didn't seem to be a sport—sort of lookin' round to see the sights. He and May seemed to take a shine to each other, and sat around and talked. He didn't go upstairs, and May wouldn't, and

the landlady began to get sore at her, so she bought wine to keep her good-natured. The man didn't seem to know about such things.

"Well, when the man went away, May went upstairs, and after a while I went up, and she was settin' on her bed braidin' her hair. She looked so funny and solemn, I said, 'What's up, May?'

"She finished her hair and then said to me, 'If you was a man, what would you think of a woman you met in a house?' I shrugged my shoulders and said, 'Search me—what they all think, I suppose—they don't think they're in church.' She started to cry and I didn't know what to do—she wouldn't take a drink nor nothin', just cried and cried. Finally, I got scared and laid down on the bed by her and she didn't go to sleep till most mornin'.

"Well, after that she was funny. The man come down every once in a while and they sat and talked and talked, and May began to get funny with her friends; wouldn't see 'em at

all, and the landlady used to go crazy to see her throwin' away good money.

"She got quieter and quieter, used to set alone in her room, and sometimes I'd catch her cryin'. One day I sat on the edge of her bed, and she took my face in her hands and looked at me hard and said, 'Do you think a decent man could love me?' I said, 'Sure, lots have loved you.' 'Not that,' she said, 'Oh God, I've had enough of that. . . . He don't think a woman like me can love because I've had others, . . . says it's the same as it was with them. . . . He don't believe I love him. He can't; . . . it ain't his fault, he just can't.'

"I lay down by her, and tried to get her to go to sleep, and after a while she was so quiet, I thought it was all right to go to my room, but just as I was taking my hands out of hers, she turned over to me and said sort of low and funny, 'Minnie—if—he should ever—be like the—the—others—if he—he should ever offer me money—I think—I think—I'd die.'

"I felt awful sorry, but couldn't do nothin'. She mooned around for another week and had a fight with Flora every day, because her friends were all gettin' sore on her. I tried to get her to go away, but she wouldn't, as she was scared she'd never see the man again."

Here Minnie was silent for a long time, then began to cry softly, not in the hysterical way of the beginning of the evening.

"I don't know what happened last night—but—he went upstairs for the first time, and after a long time I went in, and May was lyin' on her face on the bed, and she was all white and funny. She wasn't cryin', but just kept sayin', 'My God, My God,' and turnin' somethin' over in her hand. It wasn't nothin' but some money. I tried to get her to take a drink, but she wouldn't, and I saw I couldn't do nothin' for her, so went away, expectin' to come back in a little while. I was busy till late, and when I went back, she was dead. She had taken poison, and, oh, Miss Smith, Little May's dead. I just can't bear it. I saw her lyin'

all white on the bed. She's dead, I tell you, and she killed herself."

I quieted Minnie as best I could and persuaded her to lie down on the couch. After a while she dropped off to sleep, and I thought I would go over, and see if I could be of any help in the house across the way.

The poor dead girl looked so peaceful and at rest, I could not wish her back. While I was looking down at her, the landlady, a typical woman of her class, came in, her eyes swollen from weeping and her voice husky from emotion, or the effects of trying to drown her sorrow, and peering over my shoulder at the white face, whispered: "I wonder why she done it—she was perfectly happy—why, she had all the diamonds she wanted."



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## XI.

"SAY, Miss Smith? you ain't a reformer, are you? No? Well, I was sure of it; but we were having a talk about you in the back room at Duffy's last night and Molly said you wasn't. Jack Redmond said you was in with the police, but I said you was simply a little dotty and took this way of amusin' yourself. Now, don't get mad. Every one is a little off, and it's mighty sight nicer to take to givin' tea to old sports like me than to cuddlin' pug dogs."

Alice settled down in her chair before the fire and I saw that she had one of her garrulous streaks. She had also had a few drinks before coming in, and, as a certain number of drinks made her retrospective, and a little bit sentimental, I decided it would be worth while to listen to her, at least until the combined

effects of the fire and the drink made her sleepy.

"No, I don't believe an awful lot in reform. Now, there's the Rescue Home and the Magdalen homes and the House of the Good Shepherd, and all them places that's supposed to make us walk the straight and narrow path. I been in 'em all and they don't reform nothin'. 'Tain't their fault—they try hard enough. But they have too many people and you can't reform in bunches. Honest to God, you can learn more cussedness in one of them joints than you can in the street. Then there's the probation officers. They're a nice lot of women and they work mighty hard, but they can't expect a girl to tell 'em the truth. You can't blame a girl. She has to lie. She's fightin' for herself in the only way she knows how to fight.

"Reformers—rescue work— We don't want to be reformed or rescued. What we old-timers want is a chance to make our little ten a day, and not get run in every time some fly-cop thinks it's up to him to do business.

But the Night Court has helped us. Why, I used to get pinched regularly once a week. It was simply their way of making me pay for working the street—sort of like taxes. I would be goin' along minding my business and up'd come the cop or plain clothes man and say: 'Come erlong with me, Alice,' and down I went and paid in my little five. Just my contribution to the front office, the professional bailer and the cop who pinched me. They divvied up. There's one man the Night Court has just put out of a job, and that's the professional bail man. Why, they must have made thousands off us girls. When the police knew the Night Court was sure goin' to open, there were more pinches in the four nights before it opened than in the first four weeks of the Court. You see, they had to get busy. It must have hurt some of them fat-front office men to have that little bunch of money taken away; but, of course, they're not starvin' yet. They've been settin' up nights to find some way to separate us from our dough."

She was quiet for such a long time that I thought perhaps she had gone to sleep, but finally she started again.

"Was I talkin' about reform? Now, Miss Smith, be honest; how can I or any of the old tarts like me reform? I been on the streets twelve years; I don't know nothin' else. I can't work; for one thing no one would have me, and I don't know nothin' to do; even seems to me that you have to go to a special school to learn scrubbin'. Another thing, I ain't strong. You can't walk the streets for eight or nine hours a day, in rain or snow, sick or well, without payin' for it. Then, we all drink more or less. If you're tired or cold or discouraged, a drink helps along—and most men want us to drink. They want us to be jolly and, of course, don't know that this continuous performance don't lead to gayety, unless one gets it out of a bottle.

"Funny lot of men one meets. Of course, most of 'em we pick up on the street are dead common, but once in a while we get a man

that treats us as if we were human bein's and that we had sense like other people—and we girls, if we ain't educated, we're no fools. You learn somethin' just walkin' the streets. Then, some of us read a lot; of course, it's mostly flash novels, but—now look at the table in there. There's every magazine you'd find in a library, from Ladies' Home Journal to Spiritualism. And look at Molly Harris, porin' over that New Thought book——"

And she raises her voice and calls to Molly: "Say, Moll, you'd better go to work, you'll get your face punched again.

"Oh, Miss Smith, but Jim give her a lickin' the other night. I live across the hall from her and I wanted to go in and help, but Frank wouldn't let me. I thought sure he'd kill her —But just look at her! Now, what man that she picks up will ever think for a moment that she is all tied up with Mrs. Eddy and New Thought and such rot?"

She was again quiet for a long time, but

just as I was about to go to my work and leave her snoozing by the fire she began again.

"It's a damned hard life, take it any way you look at it—and there's nothin' in it at the end 'cept the hospital. We all start in for some reason or other. Most of us 'cause we get into trouble in our little town, and the man skips—he always does; and so we have to get away from where every one knows us. And, of course, we come to New York or Chicago. If we have friends to help us, we're on easy-street; if not, we're up against it hard, and sooner or later land on the street, and once in we never get off. We get lazy, we like the excitement of it, and we forget that we work like dogs and that some one else gets our money; if it ain't our fellow, it's the police or some one—be sure we have none of it. I tell you it pays in this little old New York to be in any kind of a business that lives off us women. Look at the little hotels where the street girls take their friends. The fellow hires a room for one, two, or three dollars, and then the

hotel people divvy up with the girl; and perhaps the same room is rented ten to fifteen times during the twenty-four hours, and in the end they get more for a bum little room, with rotten furniture, than the Holland House does for a suite. And look at the woman who rents rooms to us girls! She gets a flat of four rooms for sixty dollars a month, then she rents each room to a girl for two dollars and a half for the day and the same for the night—that's five dollars for the day for each room. Nice little profit! Talk about your Jews, they're not in it with some of these old ladies.

"But it's funny, Miss Smith, I don't believe crooked money sticks. Look at these same old women, they haven't got a cent in the end. We don't own a thing in the world. We just go on day by day and night by night, tryin' to get hold of a dollar, and what we make in the daytime we lose at night. We sell our bodies and the best there is in us, till we haven't a decent thought nor a clean idea, nor we don't want none in our business, it would hurt our

work. We can't know a decent woman nor a white man, and the only people we meet are in the same line as ourselves, trying to sell whatever they got that some one will buy. Why you're the only woman I know in New York that if she ain't in the business herself, ain't tryin' to make money out of it. And I like to come up here, like to sit by the fire and think aloud, and sometimes—between drinks—I think what fools we are; what we give and what we get for it. How we work at the hardest job in the world, and what do we get out of it? When we're old and sick and lonely, we look Hell square in the face.

## XII.

"No, Jedge, Ah swah to Goodness, Ah want doin' nothin'. Just foolin' elong in ma nigger way!"

She looked so earnest and serious that even I was deceived for a moment, and when she was discharged and left the Courtroom, I followed her out. She was standing on the corner when I passed her and a second look into her face showed me it was Fanny, and I stopped to speak to her.

"Well, Fanny, you got off easy to-night." She eyed me suspiciously and said nothing.

"Come on, Fanny, you know me, I'm Manda's friend."

"You ah suah you ain't no police woman?"

"Sure, you know me. Come on home with me. I live just around the corner." At that

she distinctly edged away. "Nope, not me, I jest *hin* pinched."

"But I won't pinch you. Just want to talk to you."

"What'd you want to talk to me about?"

"Oh, I don't know, I am interested in you. Know a lot of girls like you."

Suddenly a light dawns on her. "You live over theah?" pointing to my flat. "Yes." "Oh Lawd," she says in a relieved sort of way, "I know who you are. Got a little joint foh white girls. Well, Ah'll come. But don't you run me in to no nigger rescue home, cause Ah won't stand foh it."

I assured her I would do nothing to hurt her feelings and we went up to the house. I made a cup of coffee and gave her a few sandwiches. She watched me very attentively for awhile, then said, "Say, tell me de truf. What you talking to me foh and feedin' me all this lay out?"

"Well, I'll tell you. I write stories, and I

never have had a story from a colored girl and I would like to hear yours."

"You write stories."

"Yes."

"About spohtin' ladies?"

"Yes."

"Nigger spohtin' ladies?"

"Well,—Yes."

"Huh."

Every line of her face expressed disbelief.

"But I do, Fanny."

"What for, the Police Gazette?"

"No, for a book."

"Who reads such things?"

"Oh, everybody."

"White people?"

"Yes."

She tossed her head in a manner that plainly showed her disgust and disapproval.

"Well, Ah have mah 'pinion of people who ain't got nothin' better to do than read stories of spohtin' ladies. Ahm one myself, but Ah don't read no stories about 'em. Ah want

mah stories to be interestin'. Ah want somethin' doin'. Love and fightin' and detectives. We've got lots of fightin' and Gawd knows more detectives than we need, but it ain't interestin'."

"Never mind the stories, Fanny. How did you get off so easy?" She chuckled in her soft greasy way, and said, "Did you notice the Jedge? No? Well, he's fat. A fat Jedge is always easy. The moh a Jedge puts on stomach, the moh he can be conned. He's no fool, you know, a fat Jedge, but he's jest good-natured. Now when Ahm pinched, Ah takes a good look at the Jedge and if he's fat, I don't try to look *too* good, jest *nigger* good. And unless he's on and Ah've tried the trick on him befo' and he remembe's me, why, he thinks Ahm a ornery good foh nothin' coon, but not specially bad, and Ah gets off. But if it's a skinny Jedge, Why, Ah says good-bye to ma frien's, and stahts to the Island peaceful."

She leaned her face on her hands and

watched me attentively across the table. After studying my features in a most embarrassing manner, she said. "Say, Miss Smith, you ah a funny woman. Honest to God now, what do yer do it foh?"

"Do what?"

"Oh, you know. Talk to girls lak me and Mandy foh."

"But she's a nice girl. I like her."

"Yes, but she's a spoht way down deep. She ain't goin' to reform."

"I'm not trying to reform her, I just want to be friends——

Just then the bell rang and one of the French girls came in. She couldn't speak English, and Fanny was out of the conversation for a while. She picked up one of the Sunday papers and sat down by the window to wait until Marcelle went away. Marcelle wanted to use the machine a while, and I fixed it for her and left her to go on with the waist she was making. When I went over to Fanny, she showed me a big picture of the principals

in a colored show that was having a great success in town.

"Have you bin to this show, Miss Smith?"

I told her that I had seen it twice.

"Say, ain't it good? And ain't it funny the way it has took with white folks? We colohed people ain't all fools jest cause we's black. But," and she looked a long time at the picture in her hand "it makes me sick the way white women chase them two big niggers. Actresses and real ladies too. Now Ah ain't partic'la', but Ah suah draws the line at white women that gets stuck on niggers. No decent coon will take up with one o' em, cause he knows a woman is dead bum when she wants to love a black man, so if he's got any respeck for himself, he sticks to his own kind. And, you know, Miss Smith, Ah ain't no time for black and tans myself. They ain't white and they ain't black, jest ornery. Ah wants a jolly coon that sets on the stoop and sings, and ah don't want no one foolin' eround me, who's thinkin' about what the culled race is comin'

to. What's the use of thinkin'. No mattah how much we think, we's black and we'll stay black, and Ah don't care."

Marcelle had finished her seams and was ready to go. Fanny watched her attentively until she was gone, and when I came back, I could see that for some reason my conduct did not meet with her approval.

"Fo de Lawd, Miss Smith, you ought not have nothin' to do with them Frenchies. They're tough. Why, Ah wouldn't have a thing to say to 'em. And they ain't got no sense. A lot of the French girls have their washin' done by a old lady on twenty-eight street, and they tell her all their trouble. A girl named Blanche, bought one of them French lottery tickets, cost a lot of money, and she told the wash lady about it. When the drawin' time came on, the old lady said a lot of prayers to who ever French people pray to, and she wanted the Lawd to be suah not make a mistake so she gave the girl's name, and that she lived on twenty-seventh street number *one-*

*twenty-nine,* second floor, first doh to the left, and please wouldn't the Lawd send the girl the money, cause she was a good girl and needed it bad. Well, about three o'clock that night, along came a plain close man and pinched Blanche, and she got three months on the Island, and you know she blames the old woman cause she was so dahned suah about the directions. Funny, ain't it? But, as I said, they's awl sech fools, and the way they mixes their religion erlong with their bizness beats me. Now Ahm a Baptist, but Ah can't wu'k at it, and do what Ahm doin', so Ahm afraid to go to church, cause sometimes Ah gets the Sperit, and if Ah did now, Ah'd have to go to wu'k, and Ah don't like to wu'k ovah well."

"What did you do before, Fanny?"

"Oh, I took care of kids once, and Ah've done most every thing niggers can git to do, which is mostly washin'. You know a culled girl can't do an awful lot heah in New York. You kind 'o have to wash or nothin', and after while if you want any fun you toat around to

the dances and git to foolin', and lose your customers, then it's all up, and you do the next best thing."

"Do you like the street better than working? Are you happy, Fanny?"

Fanny looked at me in amazement. "Of co'se Ah like the street better'n workin'. Say, did you evah wash all day and a'hn all the next, and wash all the next and a'hn all the next, and keep it up every day foh a yeah?

I assured her that that had not been one of my trials.

"Huh, well you don't know nothin' about it, then. Ah did. My mothah and me took in washin' foh most three yeahs, and then you ask me a fool question lak that. Fo' de Lawd, Miss Smith, you can talk about feelin' misable cause you's spohtin'. Some might, but ah don't. Ahm jest gittin' fat, cause Ah don't have to git up at no five o'clock in the mawnin' to put the wash water ovah, and I sets eround most of the day, with a tin of beer and somethin' ah laks to eat, and most allers

a fool coon lafin' and tellin' stories, and ah laks it. My mothah laks it too. She's pretty old and she's the rumatiz and her laigs ah bad, and when we washed it amost killed her. But now she don't have nothin' to do but the cookin' and my little washin', jest to keep my shirt waists clean, and she spends most o' her time smokin' and eatin'. She suah thinks she is in niggah Heaven."

"So you went on the street for your mother?"

Fanny stopped chuckling suddenly and looked at me. "Huh? Went on the street foh my mothah! Cos I didn't. What a fool ideah. Why should Ah go on the street foh ma mothah? Ah went foh myself. Ah was tiad of washin'. Ah wanted to weah some decent close, stead of lookin' at 'em all the time in the wash tub. It ain't no fun to have to do up pretty close all the time, and then have to weah a old calico dress, when you want to go to a pahty."

Fanny was quiet for a few moments evidently thinking over the last remark, then:

"Went on the street foh ma mothah! Wouldn't she be mad? Why, Ah jest took her erlong with me in ma good luck, and I tell you it's agreed with her. She's the fattest coon on Thirty-third Street and that's talkin'. Every one laks ma mothah. White foks used to lak her to bring home the washin' jest to heah her talk. She ain't no new fashioned nigger, no Afro-American, no colored lady. She's proud o' jest being a good-natured fat niggah, and she'd lick Hell out o' me—I beg your pahdon, she'd lick me veah hahd, if she saw me puttin' on side or trying' to be lak a white lady.

"Well, Ah declare ah must go. Ah had no ideah it was so late." She stopped half way to the door, and said "Ah thought you wanted the story o' ma life or somethin' you could write about." I laughed and told her she could tell me that another time.

"Well," wrinkling up her broad flat nose.

"Ah don't know what ah could tell you. Ah ain't had no ve'y excitin' life. I bin in two or three fights, but ah generally went undah the bed or out o' the window cause ah ain't partial to razors or chair laigs. I suppose you want to know how Ah went wrong, and how sorry ah am and how ahm jest wearin' maself sick lookin' foh honest wohk. But ah was born wrong and ah ain't sorry and ah won't work nevah if ah see it first, so ah'll let the white girls fill you full o' them.

"Good-bye. Yes, ah'll come again. No, Ah hope you won't see me in Night Court foh a while; and (chuckling) you jest pray hahd they's always fat jedges when Fanny's up."

## XIII.

It was her first arrest and she was turned over to me on probation. I took her into a room off from the Court room to talk with her. She was a pretty Italian girl of about seventeen years of age. I was interested in her at once, as Italians are very rare in the Night Court. The girls of that race do not go into the by ways and highways, or else they do not get into trouble with the police. Her curly black hair was brushed smoothly back from her face, which seemed to set her apart from the ordinary run of big pompadoured girls that we saw every night. She was badly frightened, and I let her cry for awhile, before I tried to question her; then I found out her mother's address and the fact that she lived at home. She promised she would come and see me once a week, but she would not promise

that she would leave the street. She would say nothing, just shake her head and cry when I talked to her about work, or asked her to come to my place for a few days.

She went away, and the next day I hunted up the address she gave me, wondering if she had acquired the American girl's habit of giving me an address on a vacant lot; but she had not, and after a search I found the tenement on Leroy Street. Their flat was on the fourth floor, and after climbing the dark and rather greasy stairway, I came to the door. In response to an "Entra Lei" I opened the door and walked into an inside room that was the kitchen. The family were in the back room, the only room with a window, and all except three babies were sitting around the table making flowers. The mother gave me a chair, then went back to her work. I spoke to them, then drew the chair nearer to the table and watched them. The father, mother, little girl of about twelve, a boy and two smaller girls, and a brown-eyed tad of, I should say

four, were all sticking marguerites on wreaths for hats. The flowers were in bundles, partly stuck together, and the smallest boy took them apart and handed them to the other children, who took the yellow stamens, put them in paste, and then into the center of the marguerite, then handed the finished flower to the mother or father who placed it on the wreath. They worked quickly, showing long practice.

After a few moments I said, "I have come, Mrs. Gilletti, to talk to you about your daughter Rosa."

She flushed a dull nervous red and glanced quickly at her husband and the children.

"You—You—are from da shop where she work?" I waited a moment, then she gave me a glance that implored me to say yes, and I replied, "Yes—I want to talk to you about her —her—work."

She pushed back the flowers, picked up the baby from the crib, and started to an inside room. I followed her, and when she got inside

she gave me a chair, softly closed the door and lighted a small lamp, then sat down facing me. The baby began to cry and she gave it the breast, and sort of rocked back and forth hushing the baby. Then she stopped and eyed me anxiously, "Rosa?"

"I am sorry, Mrs. Gilletti, Rosa is in trouble. I am from the police; she has been arrested."

I could only see her face dimly, but she clutched the baby, and sat perfectly still for at least a minute.

"Ah, Madre Mia," she half moaned, "my Rosa." Then turning to me, "What for she arrested?"

I said, "She spoke to a man on the street. You understand? I am afraid Rosa needs help, and I came to you to see in what way we can help her."

"My Rosa good girl, she no bad, she good girl."

"No, she is not a bad girl, but she is in trouble now, and perhaps needs you to talk to her."

"You say she taka by da police? Tella me. She in prison—my Rosa?"

"No, she is not in prison. She will be here soon. She must come and see me once a week, and we will see if we can do something for her. Does she work, Mrs. Gilletti?"

"No," hesitatingly, "I doan know."

"Where did she work—before?"

"She work in box factory on Jones Street."

"Why did she leave it?"

The mother looked down, played with the baby's stocking and said very softly, "I doan know."

"You don't know. Is she working now?"

"I doan know," again softly without looking at me.

"Do you think she is working?" "I no can tell."

"Tell me, does she go away in the morning to work?" "Yes,—mos' ever' day."

"Now, Mrs. Gilletti, won't you help me? I want to be good to Rosa. I want to help her."

"Y—e—s. You police. I no can talk you. I doan know."

"Yes, I am in the police. But you see, if you let me know about Rosa, I will try to help her, so she won't get into trouble again. This is her first time you know. The next time she is arrested, perhaps they will put her in prison."

At this she seemed to shrink, as from a blow. Her hands were clasped tightly around the baby, her face white and drawn with misery. Her eyes stared straight ahead. She seemed to have forgotten me. Finally she half whispered "Rosa—my Rosa in prison."

Then in a moment she turned to me and said, "Oh, Senora, I tella you all. I no want you 'rest Rosa some more. I tella you all."

She glanced apprehensively at the door, went over to see if it was closed, then came back and sat down heavily in the chair. Her hands fumbled nervously with the baby's clothing and she looked in my face appealingly, as if asking me to help her to begin.

"Is Rosa your oldest?"

"Yes."

"How many children are there?"

"Eight bambini, and—and—Rosa."

"Where does your husband work, Mrs. Gilletti?"

"He no work. Oh, I tella you all. I tella you all; den you see Rosa no bad girl.

"This winter ver' bad. Padre no gotta work. He some time no work, one time one week. He go wood yard, work fifty cents some day. Some time snow come, he gotta job wid da citta for shovel da snow. Some time he empty da ash can for one lady. He do anyt'ing—anyt'ing. Some day he walk, walk, walk, all day, lokka for work. Den he come home, he putta da head in da hand, he say no gotta da God in America. No gotta da work for poor mans, he wanta die. He good man, he no drink, he no do bad, he worka hard. But he *man,* he no lak maka da flower. But all day he must maka da flower wid me and da bambini, so we can buy little to eat.

We all maka da flower. The more big bambini go school. Before go, in da morning early, must maka da flower; when school finish, dey come home quick, maka da flower. Dey no play, dey no do notting, just maka da flower. We all work, all da time. Padre, madre, bambini, all. No can maka one dollar one day. More time sixty cents. You see da marguerite. We maka one gross, we getta fi cent. It taka long time maka twelve dozen da wreath, long time. Da first ting, must putta da rent. Twelve dollar dese room. Tree little room. One all dark, lak you see, but must pay twelve dollar ever month.

"Dis year ver bad. I sick long time before baby come. I no can work much, work little. But I sick. Must doctor one time. He say must go out, must getta fresh air. How I can getta fresh air, how I can getta out? Must maka da flower. Must cook for da padre and da bambini. Some time I putta on my shawl and I sitta on da steps, but ver cold. I no got plenta close, ver cold. Den two bambini

sick, ma boy, my little girl Anna getta da trouble here," pointing to her chest, " she ver sick. Da nurse she come from da Settlement, she taka to St. Vincent. Den two week must go to da country. Dey gone one month, and all da time no so many to maka da flower. I must work more late, work more hard. Den da baby come, I ver sick. Da doctor come from da Settlement, no costa da money, but must buy da medecine. Dat costa ver dear. Poor Rosa she come home ever night, she maka da flower, she see da padre maka da flower, she see da bambini maka da flower. She see madre sick, no gotta plenty eat, no gotta notting. She maka four dollar one week, she giva me all. But twelve dollar in da box first ting for da rent, den sometime no gotta money for wood. No gotta for oil, no gotta notting, notting.

" You understan', Senora, no can live. Rosa see no can. She say me ' Madre Mia, whatta can I do? No can live dis way.' Plenty

night she come home I cry, Padre sitta head in hand, he no cry, but he wanta die."

Here she was quiet a long while, then went on in the low monotonous voice of the desperate poor.

"One day, she, ma Rosa no come home. She no come home ver late. I aska her where she been, she say wid fr'en'. Next night she come home, den again she no come ver late. Den bime by she come home, go out again. I talka her, aska her where she go. She say she work late she maka more money. Dat week she giva me ten dollar. I no can talk. Ten dollar, all one time ver much money. I no see ten dollar for one year, alla in one week. I cry, I ver sick, you know, and I cry. She tella me she gotta good work night time, she maka plenta money. But she go work day time too in da box shop. Ever week she giva me ten dollar, some time fifteen dollar. I pay back rent. I buy bambini shoe. I buy one time da week little meat. I buy Padre new shirt, new pant, new close. We all ver happy.

Some time I sing. Padre feel more lak man in he new close. He hold da head up, he no sitta da head in da hand. Some day he getta work. He ver happy. Bambini no work so hard. Some time can play after school. Some time little boy can play wid odder little boy in da street. Da little girls go Settlement back yard and swing, maka da dollie, alla same odder little girl. Rosa she laugh when she see ma face. She buy me good dress, pretty dress, ver warm. She buy me shawl, nice black shawl, and den she call me her pretty madre. She taka ma face and looka in ma eyes and say 'Madre, tella me you happy.' I tella her I no so happy since I was in Napoli."

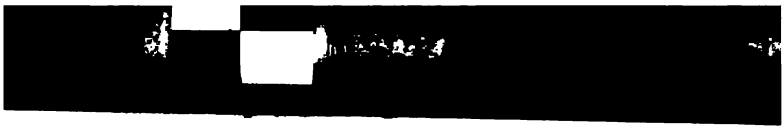
Here she was again quiet, and her voice became more soft. It was hard for me to hear her.

"Den one day—One day—Senora Frascati she come me. She know I ver glad I no so poor. I tella her no girl lak ma Rosa, she work ver hard. Senora Frascati look me very long in da face, ver hard, she say me 'Senora

Gilletti, you doan know what ting Rosa do?' I say 'Yes, she work in da box factory, she do work night time, she maka da double money.' She say 'Poor Senora Gilletti, she lie you. She no worka da box factory. She walka da street.' I no understand, den she tell me ma Rosa a bad woman. Dat she maka da money from da man."

"I no can talk, I no can breathe, I no can see for long time. It seem somet'ing in me here die. Senora Frascati, she scared, she go home. I think all da time. Ma Rosa on da street! Den I tink she lie. She jealous cause Rosa good girl, maka plenty money. But I no can forget. I watch Rosa when she come home. I try see if she look like bad girl. I no can tell. I no can tink. I no want Padre know. I fear he killa her. I fear if true, he killa hisself. He have taka da money from Rosa, da money dat his girl maka on da street. He good Italian man. Good Italian man no wanta da daughter go bad. He starve, he die, but no wanta da girl go bad. All time I wait,

I watch, I fear Padre. I leave door open so she mak no noise. I tell lie, I do ever ting so Padre no hear what ting Senora Frascati say. I near crazy, I no know what do. I tink I must tella her. But I no laka ma daughter tink I hear she bad. I shamed. I have taka her money. But whata can we do? Padre no gotta work all da time, some time little, some time no work for week. I near crazy. I tink all time perhaps Padre dis week getta work, stidy work, den I tell Rosa, no go on street. For love of Dio, Rosa, it breaka my heart. But what I do? We must live, we no can live widdout da money of Rosa. Den some time night time I lie and tink. Perhaps Rosa no bad. Perhaps lie of Senora Frascati. I must know. I crazy. I *must* know. So—when—when—Rosa go out one night—I putta ma shawl over ma head and I follo her in da street. —I see—Si, Senora,—Ma Rosa she walka da Street."



## XIV.

"Hoo-Hoo. Hey, Miss Smith. Hey, wait for me." I turned to see what all the noise was about, and saw Kitty waving wildly to me. I waited, and she came up all out of breath. "Say, but you can walk. Here I've been chasin' you for about three blocks. Whew, but I'm winded. Let me carry some of your bundles. What you been doin'? Buying out Wanamaker's?"

I explained that I had been making my Saturday night purchases, and as I was so late, I had to take them home myself.

"But why all this rush, and what is the cause of my popularity with you to-night, Kitty?"

"I was just a-comin' up to your flat. Say, do you want to go chasin' with me to-night?"

"*What!*" and I stopped suddenly in the street. "Oh, ain't that good?" and she laughed in a way that made me wonder if all the neighbors would come to see whom I was taking home *this* evening. Once in a while I became a little nervous about the opinion of my friends on the street, as I have not yet become callous to their little nods and laughs when they see me with an especially strong type of the girls in whom I am interested.

"Oh, you do look funny, Miss Smith. Nothin' doin' that'll hurt you. I just wondered if you would like to go hoppin'. Chase from one place to another and see what's doin'."

"What kind of places?"

"Oh, the Haymarket, and Freeman's Hall, and the dance halls on the East Side, and the girls who hit the pipe. Just see what we all come to if we hit the booze too much and keep on goin'."

"I don't know, Kitty, tell me a little more

about it. How do you happen to be doing all that? Aren't you busy to-night?"

"Nope, I'm a lady of leisure. Do you suppose I would be chasin' along the street yellin' my head off at you if I was workin'? Not *me,* a cop might not like my style, and give me a pleasant walk to Jefferson Court. But to-night, I want you to know, I'm thoroughly respectable. I'm a 'lady' who wishes to see the underworld, so I'm goin' down and look at the poor fallen women. And I'll set at a table and absorb soft drinks and say, 'Poor things, can't nothin' be done for 'em?'"

"But what do you want me to go for?"

"Oh, you'll like it. You've never seen it, and then I'll be so Dam—darned respectable if you're along, I won't get in no trouble."

"But can we go alone?"

"We can, but we won't. My friend is goin'. He's a detective in a small way, and he'll go along. Come on, Miss Smith. I know 'em all, and it'll be fun. I ain't been down for most three months, and I want to see

some o' the girls. And I got a friend somewhere down there, used to live with me. She's got to hittin' the booze or dope or somethin', and I want to see her."

"All right, come up with me and put these things away, and I'll go. Where do you meet your friend?"

"He'll pick us up at the Haymarket. Ever been there?"

We went up to the flat, and I changed my dress, and we started out. At the Haymarket a very good-looking young man joined us, and Kitty said "Shake hands with my friend Miss Smith, Mr. Daley. This is Jim, Miss Smith, and he's all right."

We very formally shook hands, and then he bought tickets and we went inside. It was a large room with tables around the sides, and floor space left for dancing. A balcony ran around three sides of the room, on which were more tables. At some of the tables sat men, at others were men and women, while at some women sat alone. It was all very gay and

rather jolly looking. Just as we came in, a waltz was starting.

We found a table and sat down. A waiter came up and we ordered three lemonades. Kitty was interested, and I could see she wanted to dance, but would not leave me alone at the table, for which I was intensely thankful. There were some very pretty girls dancing, and more strolling around the room, showing off their clothes, and plainly willing to make friends with any one.

"Do you see that girl over there, Miss Smith? That's Nera, a Russian. Three years ago she was the prettiest woman in New York. She could 'a' had anythin' she wanted, but she won't stick to a good thing when she sees it. Oh, there's the Baroness. Come here, Fay. Gee! I'm glad to see you. What you been doin'? Set down and have a drink. Miss Smith, this is Fay, and you know Jim, don't you?"

I think she was the most bleached blonde that I had ever seen. Her hair was in a sort

of aurora borealis, crowned with a hat that was the size of a small dining-table. She had on a chiffon dress, and a great big bunch of roses. When she walked she swayed from side to side, putting her bust forward and her hips back, until I was in fear she would break in. two. She sat down and began to talk in her society manner. We asked her what she would have, and she said a Koumiss. The waiter brought something white in a small glass and she drank it. I said:

"I should think if you drank many of those during the evening it would make you sick, let alone having an uncomfortable sort of an edge."

She laughed and said:

"That's only sugar and water. If we ask for benedictine we are brought tea. Of course, I couldn't drink all th' evenin', if I took the real thing."

"Tell me, how's business," asked Kitty.

"Business is on the bum. This place is no good. There are too many college boys com-

in' here now, and they can generally just scrape up the price of a drink between 'em. Drinks ain't what we are after. If I want to drink, I can do that at home."

"Do you come here every night?"

"Yes, I have been here nearly every night for two years. Say, Kitty, do you see that woman over there in black? She's a new one. Do you know her?"

"No, who is she?"

"Well, she served two years for shootin' her husband. Didn't you read about it? Her husband was no good, and was always chasin'. One night, just before she was goin' to have a baby, he drove up with healthy Mary, you know her, used to be at —'s, and he hollered in to her to bring out his overcoat. She brought it out and a revolver with it and shot him dead. She only got two years."

"What's she doin' here?"

"Well, she has the kid, and she don't know very much. Can't do scrubbin', and ain't educated enough to do anythin' else, so she

has to live. But she ain't doin' very well. Ain't gay enough for the college boys, and a little too old for the old men. I must go. This won't pay my room rent. Come and see me, Kitty. Good-bye, I'm pleased I met you."

And she sways across the room, and smiles at a man who has just come in, who evidently asks her to have a drink, as she sits down by him.

"Come on, this is slow. We're too early for this place. We ought not 'a' hit it until about twelve."

As we go out, I ask about the Baroness.

"Tell me, Kitty, do all the girls do that in those places? Drink water?"

"Yes, some of them do. But Fay is sick."

"Why, Kitty. That can't be so. Look at her complexion. I never saw such an exquisite skin as that girl had."

"Oh, you can't tell about the skin. Really, it's funny. I've seen girls that were nearly dead who had pink and white skins and who looked as harmless as Mary's little lamb."

Here we are. This is Freeman's Hall. Perfectly respectable. "We won't stay but a minute. I want to show you an old woman that's got a rotten job, but she makes money."

We went into the hall, which was filled with boys and girls of the respectable working class. Here Kitty danced a couple of times with Jim, and then she came to me.

"See that old woman over there? That nice-looking motherly woman? Well, she sees some pretty girl here, and finds out about her, and talks to her, and asks her to her home, and it is a joint she runs her into. She gets ten dollars a girl. She tried that scheme on me, when I was a little more innocent lookin'. She said "Dearie, what pretty hands you have. I am a manicurist. Won't you come into the dressing-room and let me manicure them? They are too pretty to have soiled nails." Well, I let her manicure my hands and fix my face, and slop over me all she wanted to. Then when it came to the asking me up to her house, I gave her the merry Ha-ha. I said 'Hey, you

old goat, I been on the street three years. You can't teach me no tricks. Get some little factory girl. Thanks for the manicure; and I skidooed. Wasn't that one on her? You've seen her; now let's go where there's somethin' doin'."

We went down the Bowery to a place called "*The Fly.*" It was a room behind a saloon. When we arrived, it was filled with men and women sitting at tables, mostly drinking beer. Some sort of music was made by a piano and a concertina. When we were seated a few moments, and had ordered our drinks, a woman got up to sing. She had short hair that needed a few passes with the curling tongs to make it look like anything, and she was dressed in a dirty shirtwaist and an old brown skirt. She sang a song in a dreadful voice, then came down to us and greeted Kitty, and shook hands with me as if she had known me all her life. She was called Mulligan. She took milk as her drink. Every one in the place *slanged* her and she gave back as good as was

sent. As she passed a table some one gave her a nickel and she pulled a pocket-book from her neck and said:

"Gee, but I'm makin' money. A dollar and a half to-night, and it's only twelve."

"How late do you work, Mulligan?"

"Oh, until about five. This mornin' it was a quarter to six when I went home."

"Do you make much?"

"Yep. Last Saturday night I made Four seventy-five. But that was a good night."

"Say, Mulligan," says Kitty. "Where's that fellow you had? Sort of a good-for-nothin' soldier, wasn't he?"

"Don't you say nothin' about my man. He's on trial to-morrow for desertion. Poor boy, he wanted to see me, and he run away."

Just then a soldier at another table said:

"Hey, Mulligan, eight years all right, for Jones."

"Go on, you old stiff," she replied. "Eight years nothin'. He'll get six months."

Then turning to Kitty, "We're going to

get married when he comes out. I'm savin' all I can, and I want enough to get a good room, about three a week, and we'll be fine."

"Will you keep workin'?"

"Sure, why should I stop! How'll he eat if I don't work?"

I had been watching the people in the place, and their youth impressed me. The girls all seemed not much more than twenty, and the men were mostly young soldiers or sailors, with a sprinkling of working men and roughs. A man near me sniffed something up his nose, and after a moment I saw another do it. I asked Mulligan what it was.

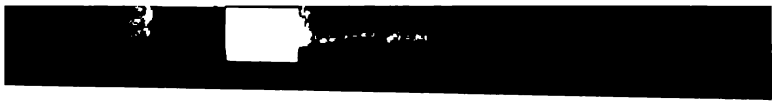
"Don't you know what that is? Well you *are* green. That's cocaine."

"Cocaine! But why do they take it that way?"

"Oh, it makes you feel good quick. Nearly every one here does."

"The women too?"

"Yes, but they go into the toilet."



"Do you do that? It seems an awful thing."

"No, you bet I don't. I don't do nothin' but sing, and make my money honest. I'm straight, and everybody knows it."

"Have you been coming here long?"

"Yes, for five years. I like it. It is the jolliest place in town. Sometimes I take parties out to see the sights, and we always come back to the 'Fly.' You're sure to find somethin' doin'. Say, Kit. Did you see Marian lately?"

"No, I'm huntin' her. I'm awful worried. I got a funny letter from her tellin' me to send a' old watch I got of hers, and some clothes, to her mother. She didn't tell me where she was, so I thought I'd find her, if I chased to all her old hang-outs."

"Gee, but she's on the bum! She's been down with Mamie, you know that old slob, and they're livin' in Chinese alley, and she's hittin' the pipe, and just goin' plumb to Hell. They keep her plugged up with dope all the

time, and Mamie takes all her money. She tried to kill her and a Chinaman the other night. When she's sober she's a devil. I don't know what's the matter with her."

"I want to find her. She used to be an awful nice girl. You know, Miss Smith, I don't understand how a girl that has had her chances can get so on the bum. Now with girls like me and Mulligan, this is Heaven. We're born poor and dirty. I bet Mulligan's never been off the East Side in her life. Have you?"

"No, and I don't want to. This is good enough for me. I'm better off'n if I was workin' in a box factory at four per. Most of the girls have been workin' some time, but you can't work and have no fun. And Miss What's-your-name, you can't live on three-fifty or four a week, and what's the use tryin'. None in *mine*."

"But you haven't told me about Marian. Who is she?"

"Kit knows more about her. I first saw

her when she blowed in here one night about four months ago."

"Yes," spoke up Kitty, "I've knowed her a long time. She lived with me once. I don't know nothin' about her. She was awful pretty when I first saw her. She was pulled once when I was, and I paid her fine. Don't know what it was but I just looked at her and ponied up the five. She didn't never talk about herself. She is educated like a real lady. Can talk French like a dago, and say! you ought to hear her play the piano. But drink, well, she was a tank. She'd get the blues, and drink until she couldn't see, then she'd just raise Hell. But why she came here, I can't see. 'Cause it's cheap here, there ain't a dollar in the bunch, and the girls are the limit."

"Well, she's in with the Chinese now. That's rotten, I think. Oh Kit, look at Bill over there. He's just out from a five year stretch."

"What is he?"

"He's got small hands. Works the cars. The rest of his crowd will blow in here soon. Four or five of them are workin' Broadway cars now."

"Working Broadway cars, what do you mean?"

"Oh four or five git on a crowded car and shove up against a person and touch him. And they're all right, too. They touched a man for his wad the other night, who had it buttoned inside his coat, and an overcoat over that. It means you know your business when you can do that. Say, they did a cute thing the other night. You know Murphy. Well, he made a good thing, and he bought hisself a diamond pin. He was on a car and saw the bunch and kept his hand over his tie. When he got off to take the elevated, the bunch followed him, but he wouldn't take his hand away. When he stepped on the car he thought he was safe, and just as the car started he took his hand away and put it on his nose to give the boys the merry ha-ha,

and what do you think Bill did. Made a grab and got tie, pin and all, and the car went on, Murphy yellin' like a pig under a gate. But he couldn't get off till the next station, and by that time the pin was soaked.

"Oh, there's that guide with a party of swells. He's always good for a half to me. So long! Thanks miss," as I slip her a quarter. "Come again."

"Let's get out of here. I'm worried about Marian. Hey, Mulligan, where'll we find Marian?"

"Oh, go over to Birdie's, and if she ain't round that joint, try Mamie. She'll say she don't know, but she does."

It seemed good to get out in the fresh air again. On the street we met several men hurrying along with girls. Kitty said, "See them couples? That's the Italians takin' their girls to their work or takin' them home. Those Italian pimps are the limit. Won't even let the girl go to the joint alone, but take her there and come and get her, so as to be sure

they get all her money, and see she don't meet any one to tell her troubles to. They treat a woman like dirt, and sell her same as they would a cow. They beat the Frenchies for cussedness, and that's goin' some."

"Kitty, do you mean to tell me that those men take those women to the houses where they work, and then come after them?"

"Sure," says Jim, and I find for the first time that he has a voice. "Did you see that little girl on the corner? She's supportin' a man and his wife. Is dead stuck on the fellow, and used to work for him, and he married a girl, and now she's workin' for the two of 'em. Gives 'em every cent she makes."

"But why. *Why?*"

"Search me! I don't know. Women are such fools. Every woman you seen to-night ain't workin' for herself. She don't get her dough. She has to cough up to some man or get her face punched."

"Is it just amongst these rather low girls?"

"No, the Broadway girls are just the same.

Once in a while you find an American girl who's workin' for herself, but not often."

"Tell me, Kitty, is there much—much—sickness amongst them?"

"No more than any girl that's workin' the street. Why, nine out of ten girls is sick. They can't help it. How can you keep from it, when you're meeting every Tom, Dick and Harry. You can be sure, Miss Smith, no matter how swell a girl is, nor whether she is workin' Broadway or Mott street, she's bound to come up against it. You can't tell by her looks. But here we are. Say, isn't this rotten? How white girls can cotton up to Chinamen beats me."

We entered a house that had a chop suey place on the first floor. The rest of the house was filled with women, and the fumes of opium came down the stairs. We went in several rooms, where girls were sitting in wrappers. The more prosperous ones seemed to work two together. They had a little sitting-room,

furnished in gaudy Chinese embroideries, and each a bedroom opening out of it.

On the top floor we went into a room that was kitchen, dining-room, bedroom in one. The main furniture was a bed, on which were a Chinaman and a white woman. They were lying crosswise on the bed with an opium lay out between them. The woman had been smoking, and was coughing when we went in. She was about forty years old, and in the last stages of consumption. It was one of the show places of Chinatown. The man would fix the pipe and sing Chinese songs, while the woman would smoke, and show the sightseers how low a woman can get. It was pitiful to see her lying there, every once in a while racked by a cough that would take her breath away, and hear the dreadful creature yell his songs, while he prepared the thing that was plainly killing her. In every place we asked for Marian, and here Kitty was directed to a room opposite. We went in and found a woman who was still hand-

some. She chatted with us, and then lay down to her pipe. It was all a joke to her. She explained that she was trying to break the habit after eighteen years of smoking, not because she thought it bad for her, but that opium was too dear. She said it cost $12.00 a jar now, and that meant it cost her about a dollar a day to smoke, and she couldn't afford it.

Kitty asked the usual question, "How's business?" and she got eloquent.

"Business is on the bum. I'm havin' more trouble than's comin' to me. Last night Birdie was pinched. You know these Chinese are devils. She was living at Ah Mow's, and when she left, he went and swore that she stole $24.00 from him, and she had to give bail. The fool judge gave bail at a thousand, and it cost her twenty for the professional bailer. She'll be discharged in the morning I think, but she's still out that twenty. And if it had been a charge of a dollar more, her picture would 'a' been in the art gallery. You

know a girl don't have no luck any more. Now there's Marian——"

"What about Marian? I'm huntin' her."

"Oh, Lord, Kit, she's dead."

"What?"

"Yes, go up to her room and see her. You know I believe as sure as I'm settin' here, she killed herself. The doctor said an over-dose of opium, that was what it was, but I think she took it, and not by mistake."

"But why in the world—Oh, I wish I hadn't come. Why did she do it. Was she in trouble?"

"No, no more than we're all in trouble. Why shouldn't she kill herself? She's a dam sight better off. I'll do the same some day. There's thirty girls in this old rookery, and between the rent and the women who sell us these old five-dollar wrappers for twenty dollars, and the fines, and the pups who take our money, we're always up against it. I'm sore —guess I'll have a smoke. Go up and see her. The girls are all scared to death, and

so are the Chinks. They've fixed her room up the best they know how. They all kind of liked her, tho' she wasn't our kind. Go on, I want to lie down. Go on."

We went up stairs to a room furnished like the rest of them, with gaudy Chinese embroideries and mirrors everywhere where there was not a cheap picture in a gilt frame.

The dead girl lay on the bed, dressed in a silk wrapper. Above her head on the wall was a shelf on which sat a Chinese idol. Before it were two red candles lighted, and a little brass bowl in which burned incense. Into her hands some girl had slipped a rosary.

We turned silently and left the room. Kitty said nothing on the way home, and at my door hesitated, went up to our escort and put her hand on his shoulder, looked him quietly in the eyes for a moment, then turned and said, "Good night, Jim," and went up the steps with me.